Washington MONTHLY

Ed Kilgore on Mark Penn

RUDY AWAKENING

AS PRESIDENT, GIULIANI WOULD GRAB EVEN MORE EXECUTIVE POWER THAN BUSH AND CHENEY. HIS MAYORALTY TELLS THE STORY.

BY RACHEL MORRIS

PLUS:

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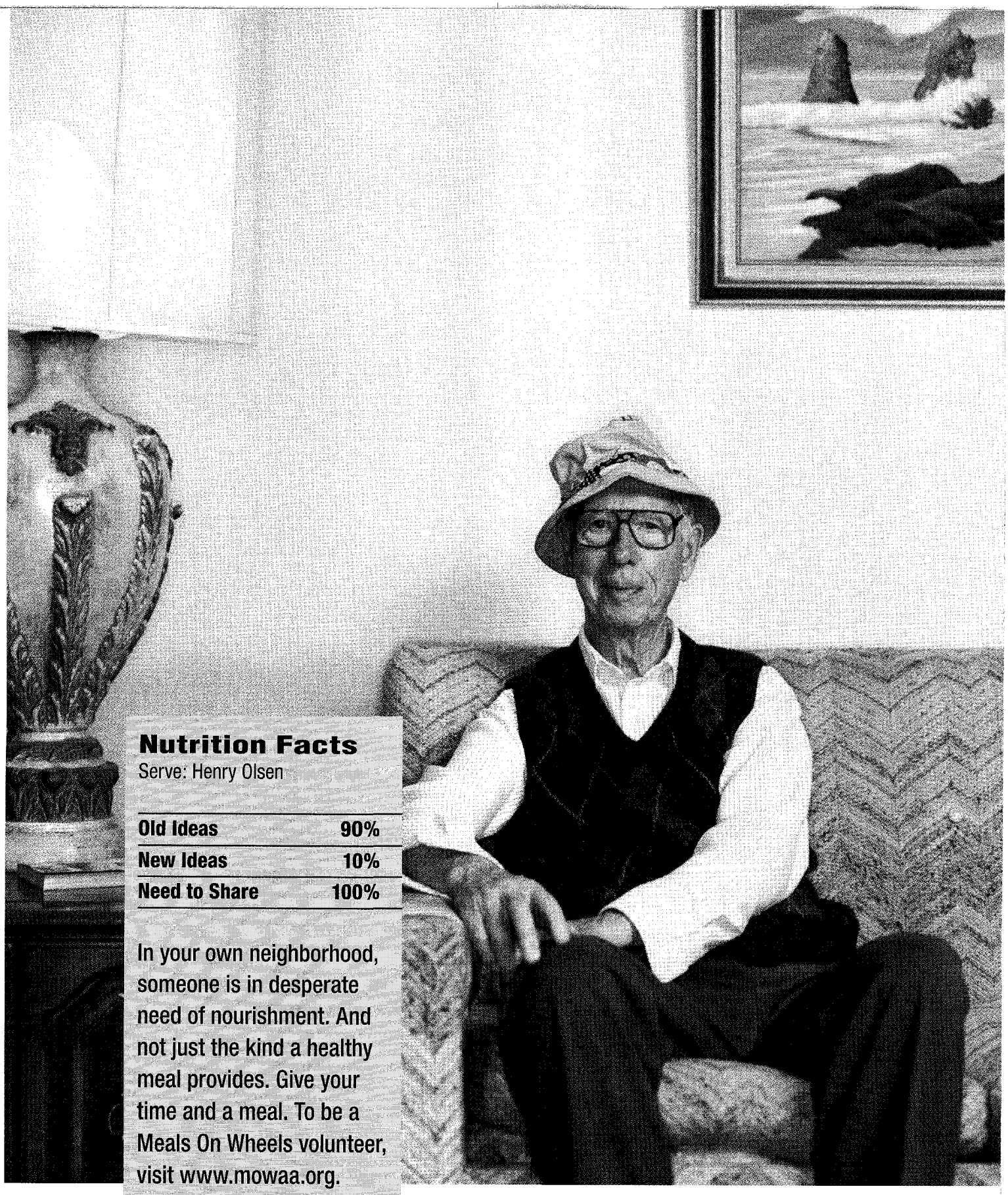

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Washington MONTHLY

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Editor's Note

PAUL GLASTRIS

An Equal and Opposite Overreaction

For every abusive action in Washington, there is an equal and opposite overreaction. The lies of Vietnam led to an excessive distrust of the military. Watergate eventually created a mentality in Washington that any conceivable charge of presidential misconduct deserves an independent counsel investigation, which in turn gave us the farcical Clinton impeachment. Exposure of CIA and FBI misconduct (trying to kill Castro with exploding cigars; subverting peaceful domestic political groups) led to those agencies becoming extraordinarily risk-averse, to the point that they could not rouse themselves to act on evidence of domestic al-Qaeda activities they had on hand in the months prior to 9/11.

We may now be entering a similar period of overreaction. Almost every week brings fresh revelations of abuse of presidential power by the Bush administration. The latest news, broken by the *New York Times*, is that in 2005, the Justice Department, having supposedly repudiated the infamous "torture" memo, issued at least two more memos authorizing even more extreme practices, without informing key Democrats in Congress. This White House truly is without precedent. Past presidents who took extraconstitutional actions in time of war, like Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt, did so openly and claimed those powers only as emergency measures. Bush, by contrast, has acted largely in secret and has claimed these powers as inherent to the presidency. Historically, presidential authority, once it expands, seldom contracts. So there's a real danger that Bush's successor, whoever it is, will pocket the enhanced power Bush has asserted. Indeed, as Rachel Morris notes in this month's cover story, at least one candidate, Rudy Giuliani, will likely seek more (see "Rudy Awakening," p. 28).

But there's also the opposite risk: that, because the Bush administration has stepped so far outside legal bounds, future presidents will feel they must dwell too far inside legal bounds. Such behavior may please some constitutional scholars and newspaper editorial boards. But the truth is that great presidents, for the good of the country, have often negotiated the outer limits of the law. In 1940, FDR overrode the will of an isolationist Congress by crafting a controversial "executive agreement" that allowed the U.S. to provide Great Britain with destroyers it desperately needed to stave off Hitler. In 1948, Harry Truman circumvented filibustering southern senators by issuing an executive order integrating the armed forces.

The need for inventive executive action presented itself even during the supposedly quiescent 1990s. In late 1994, the Mexican peso collapsed, threatening a global financial meltdown. When Congress refused to support a White House request for an emergency $40 billion package of loan guarantees, Bill Clinton unilaterally extended a $20 billion line of credit to Mexico by tapping the Exchange Stabilization Fund, an obscure federal account that presidents had hitherto used only to shore up the dollar. Many conservative Republicans and labor-oriented Democrats cried foul, but Clinton's move had the desired effect: the peso stabilized, and Mexico repaid the loans ahead of schedule.

Clinton faced such a hostile and aggressive Congress that sometimes his only defense was to go on executive offense. In 1996, after vetoing numerous bills that would have allowed coal mining companies to dig up remote and pristine tracts of public land in southern Utah, a fed-up Clinton declared 1.7 million acres of that land as the new Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument, thus protecting it from further development. He did so by invoking the 1906 Antiquities Act, a law originally meant to give presidents the power to safeguard land with sites of significant historic or scientific value. The Utah land contained such sites, and previous presidents had similarly used the Antiquities Act to protect large wilderness areas (the Grand Canyon National Park had started off this way), though never an area so large in size. Conservatives went ballistic. Rep. Duncan Hunter called Clinton's move "something that I think would happen in the former Soviet Union or some Third World dictatorship." Hunter would later become a staunch defender of George W. Bush's right to torture terror suspects and tap domestic phone lines without warrants.

The next president, if a Democrat, will probably have a Democratic-controlled Congress to support his (or her) agenda. But considering that Senate Republicans this year have seen fit to utilize the filibuster at three times the normal rate, a Democratic president can expect unprecedented efforts to block, for instance, his or her nominees. Will that president listen to pundits on the *Washington Post* op-ed page who will no doubt condemn the use of recess appointments on the grounds that Democrats criticized Bush for doing so? Or will the new president recognize that just because Bush overutilized this prerogative is no reason why another president can't use it when appropriate, as when Bill Clinton overrode homophobes in Congress to name the openly gay James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg?

George W. Bush has definitely given new meaning to the term "the imperial presidency." But as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote in his book on the subject, "The answer to the runaway Presidency is not the messenger-boy Presidency." American democracy, he said, "must discover a middle ground between making the President a czar and making him a puppet." Here's hoping the next president finds that middle ground. WM

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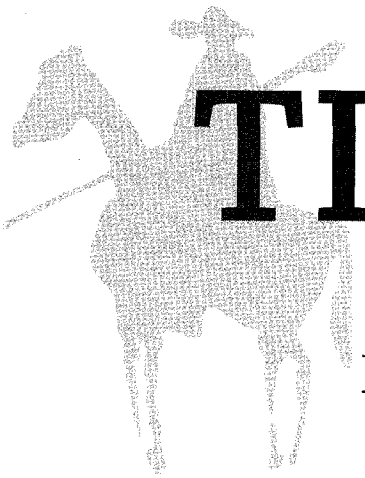

TILTING *at windmills*

By Charles Peters

Cruel to Jewell

You may be unaware that Richard Jewell died recently. Jewell, you will recall, was the security guard at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics when a bomb exploded, killing one woman and injuring 111 people. Many more would have died or been injured had not Jewell discovered the bomb minutes before it detonated, and started moving the crowd away.

He was briefly hailed as a hero, but then was transformed into the number one suspect by incompetent FBI agents desperate to break the case and by one of the first of the media frenzies to which we have now sadly become accustomed.

Cox Enterprises and its newspaper, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the number two culprits close behind the FBI, managed to escape a libel suit they should have lost by dragging out legal proceedings. NBC and CNN at least agreed to compensate Jewell with a monetary settlement. But most of an equally guilty media avoided giving the ultimate finding of Jewell's innocence anywhere near as much space as they had devoted to the accusation of his guilt. The case remains a stunning example of the harm a media frenzy can do. It is no wonder that newspapers and networks did not want to remind their readers and viewers of their culpability by dwelling on Jewell's death.

Scoops from lame ducks

One reward of having endured life in Washington for the forty-six years that I have lived here is that you come to understand a few eternal tendencies of the natives. One, observable in the last year of any administration, is a phenomenon that has earned the somewhat harsh name of "lame-duck guts." As the fear of being fired diminishes for the political appointee who is already preparing to leave, he becomes more willing to speak out about what's wrong. Civil servants also know they're freer to talk during an administration's dying days, since the will for the administration to go to the trouble of firing a civil servant also diminishes.

The reason I mention this is to alert my fellow journalists to the bonanza of good stories that awaits them, offering ordinarily hard-to-get glimpses into Washington's inner sanctums.

> It might help our Army increase its number of recruits, if, like the Iraqi army's, they were told they could serve near their home.

Strike one, Hillary fouls

Hillary Clinton continues to win the debates between the Democratic presidential candidates. During the one at Dartmouth, however, there were three points on which some observers, including me, found that she was not impressive.

The least serious was when she couldn't choose whether to root for the Chicago Cubs, the team she claims to have grown up supporting, or the New York Yankees, the team that represents her second adopted home. For a true baseball fan, the choice was obvious—in favor of the team you grew up with, especially since, as in the case of the Cubs, the team has rarely reached the World Series and last won it in 1908. Mark Shields observes, "Doesn't she know that the Democrats are the party of the underdog?"

Strike two, Hillary punts

On a more significant matter, Social Security, Clinton refused to state how she would fix it, while both Edwards and Obama answered that they would raise the cap that now protects people from paying Social Security taxes on any income over $100,000 a year. Is she afraid of offending her wealthy friends and backers?

Strike three, Hillary chortles

Finally, to me the most telling moment of the debate came when Clinton laughed when Mike Gravel said she should be ashamed of her vote that day for Joe Lieberman's proposal to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization. Instead of laughing, which obviously she did in the hope that the audience would think Gravel was just being off the wall again, she really should have been ashamed. Joe Lieberman has said he wants us to attack Iran. He and his allies are playing a dangerous game that could get us into another war, and she should not have joined them. Is she afraid of offending the right-wing Jewish lobby that supports Lieberman, who now seems to represent AIPAC more than the people of Connecticut?

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The evil of access

The news that the Clintons acted to suppress a critical article about her staff that was to appear in *GQ* is just the tip of the iceberg. I have heard similar stories from other media sources. I don't blame the Clintons as much as I do the reporters who tremble at the thought of being denied access to the next Clinton White House. What I cannot understand is that I can't recall a single case of a reporter, newspaper, magazine, or network being hurt by a White House cold shoulder. Does anyone really think that the reporter who did the *GQ* story, Josh Green, has had his career injured by this episode?

Recall the best-known example of enterprising coverage of Washington, *All the President's Men*. Woodward and Bernstein had no access to White House big shots. They got the story by working the periphery. As for access journalism in general, Art Levine once asked in these pages if Nazi Germany would have best been covered by interviewing Himmler and Goebbels.

Overlooking Obama

As the media is rushing to get right with Hillary Clinton—that's what West Virginia politicians call making sure you board the bandwagon before it's too late—they're not doing right by the other candidates. On October 2, for example, Obama made what I regard as a truly great speech, at DePaul University. The articles in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, instead of telling the reader what Obama said, and evaluating it, dealt with the politics of the speech. I invite you to make up your own mind about the speech and the coverage by going to www.barackobama.com, and then reading the October 3 articles by Jeff Zeleny of the *New York Times* and Alex MacGillis of the *Washington Post*.

Getting in bed with Ted

Senator Ted Stevens, whom you may recall as the sponsor of that $398 million Bridge to Nowhere in his home state of Alaska, is under investigation for his relationship to Bill Allen, a former executive of VECO Corporation, a company that has been the beneficiary of lucrative federal contracts. Allen has pleaded guilty to paying more than $400,000 in bribes to officials and Alaska state legislators, including Stevens's son Ben, who, Allen says, accepted $4,000 a month in bribes disguised as consulting fees.

Allen also says he "personally oversaw the rebuilding of Stevens' house," which as a result more than doubled in value, according to the *Washington Post*. The contractors who did the work told the grand jury that their bills were sent to VECO for Allen's approval.

Stevens says that "he paid every bill he received" for the rebuilding. This is an answer you have to love. It sounds righteous, yet it avoids specifying what bills he paid or how much they represent of the value added to the house. (For more on Stevens's activities in Alaska, see "State of Dependence," by Charles Homans, p. 12.)

Massaging the judiciary

Since 1994 I can't recall having had a sympathetic thought about O. J. Simpson. But I came as close to having one as I could—which is still pretty far from close—when I heard of his legal troubles in Nevada. The Nevada judicial system falls somewhat short of the ideal. More specifically, it is heavily politicized with a number of judges who, to put it gently, do not appear to have been selected on the basis of merit.

Consider district court judge Elizabeth Halverson. Her bailiff has complained, according to *Governing* magazine, that she "demanded that he give her foot massages and back rubs." She has been stopped by the county's chief judiciary officer, Kathy Hardcastle, from hearing criminal cases, because of what Hardcastle calls her "seemingly ... angry, paranoid and bizarre behavior towards staff."

Halverson does seem a bit short of judicial temperament. On the other hand, the complexities of the Nevada judiciary are illustrated by the fact that Ms. Hardcastle may be less than objective, having previously punished Halverson when Halverson was planning to run for a family court judgeship against Hardcastle's husband.

Trucks amok

Could heavy trucks have had something to do with the collapse of that bridge in Minneapolis? They were found to have been a factor in the 2000 collapse of Milwaukee's Hoan Bridge. A forty-ton truck, which is supposed to be the weight limit for interstate highways, according to the Associated Press, "does as much damage to the road as 9,600 cars." Yet some states allow even larger trucks on their highways. Last year, Texas alone issued nearly "39,000 such permits."

Good capitalism

I'm encouraged to see two new books—*Supercapitalism,* by Robert Reich, and *The Battle for the Soul of Capitalism,* by John Bogle, the long-term head of Vanguard Mutual Funds—that begin the serious questioning that is desperately needed of what has happened to American capitalism. The good kind of capitalism meant good men tried to make money, making good products or providing good services to consumers at reasonable prices, with financing provided by banks and investors who believed in them, and regulation created under leaders like Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt to keep the bad guys out of the game, or at least to minimize their influence.

> Instead of laughing at Mike Gravel, Hillary *should* have been ashamed.

Bad capitalism

The good capitalism never worked quite that ideally, but it was a hell of a lot better than what has developed in the last twenty-five years. Today's smart guys devote their talents to making money, period. They create, buy, and sell financial instruments. They don't create companies,

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they trade in companies. When they buy a company, they do one of two things: they fire workers, claim they've increased efficiency, and unload the company at a big profit; or they milk the company of all the cash they can get before finding a sucker to take the empty shell off their hands. My friend Mike Kinsley recently wrote a piece asking how employees could be loyal to an employer like Avis that changed every couple of years as the Wall Street operators play their greedy game.

Loony capitalism

There was a nutty "markets are always better" and "regulation is always bad" philosophy that came in under Ronald Reagan and opened the door for the bad guys to rush in and tempt good guys to lose their integrity in their haste to get rich. What happened in the sub-prime mortgage market illustrates much of what has gone wrong. A new financial instrument was created. It bundled mortgages bought from the original lender and then sold the bundle to a hedge fund or some other financial institution that had no relation to the original borrower.

This meant that the original lender was tempted to make loans on any terms, however unsound or misleading, that would attract borrowers, because the lender would be paid off by the bundler and did not have to worry about collecting the loan. The institution that bought the bundle did so with assurances from rating firms who wanted the bundlers' business that the loans were solid. But when the institution found out that some of the loans were shaky, they had no relationship with the borrower to discover just how shaky. Thus, they got nervous, as did the rest of the financial system to which they were linked.

> Can you really doubt that in his inner soul the soldier wants to live, and to live as a whole human being, with all his limbs, a brain that still works, and a face that isn't disfigured?

Scary capitalism

Even worse, and this should make you nervous, there are other financial instruments out there called derivatives. If you want to be sure of getting a headache, ask someone to explain derivatives to you. But you should understand this much: they are not certain to be worth one cent more than the paper they're written on. Their value is derived from the value of other instruments, like those bundled mortgages, so that when the value of the bundled mortgage becomes dubious, its derivative becomes even more so. How much money do derivatives now represent? In the nominal sums that are on the accountants' books, half a quadrillion dollars. That's $500,000,000,000. We won't discover how much of that is real money until there is a market collapse, when it may be too late.

A few good capitalists

There are some good guys in the world of capitalism. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett are examples of the right kind of entrepreneur and the right kind of investor. Gates made his money by creating a good product, and Buffett by carefully investing in good companies. And they have given large chunks of their money to the cause of helping those less fortunate. But the hard truth of today's capitalism can be found in a book, *All the Money in the World*, edited by Peter Bernstein and Annalyn Swan, who report that 99 percent of the assets of the country's super-rich remains in their own pockets, with only a little over 1 percent going to the kind of worthy projects supported by Gates and Buffett.

Sick capitalism

That kind of greed has been demonstrated in what has happened to the nation's nursing homes. Nursing homes began as something that a nice lady who had inherited a big house but little income did to make ends meet and do good at the same time: taking elderly neighbors into her home and providing them loving care for a modest fee. Now these homes are owned by large corporations to whom profit is more important than the quality of care. Habana Health Care Center, in Tampa, Florida, was purchased in 2002, one of the thousands of nursing homes bought in recent years by large private investment firms like Warburg Pincus and the Carlyle Group. Habana created a "hellhole," Vivian Hewitt told the *New York Times* after her mother died when "a large bedsore became infected with feces."

Honest Obe

All of this helps explain why I was proud of Barack Obama when he told a roomful of Wall Streeters that they must abandon their "what's good enough for me is good enough." He continued: "If we are honest, I think we must admit that those who have benefited from the new global marketplace—and that includes almost everyone in this room—have not always concerned themselves with the losers in this new economy."

Make the pledge

I was not proud of Obama on another matter, however. I still have not recovered from hearing him, John Edwards, and Hillary Clinton refuse to pledge that they would have our troops out of Iraq by 2013.

Our troops are not the solution. They're part of the problem. Their presence protects the Green Zone, where Iraqi politicians can endlessly delay facing their duty to find a political solution that will end their country's sectarian strife. Furthermore, our troops constitute a magnet that draws Islamic extremists into Iraq to kill our soldiers.

Why can't we leave?

As for Obama's comment that we can only withdraw slowly, I remind him and our readers that we got our troops out of Vietnam at the rate of 140,000 a year while a war was raging. Assuming the 30,000 surge troops are withdrawn before Bush leaves office, this means we could get everybody out of Iraq in one year.

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John Edwards said we need enough troops to protect the embassy in Baghdad and the American civilians who will still be working in Iraq. Why? We took all of our people out of Vietnam, including all civilian workers and the entire embassy. Obama thinks we need to leave a small force to fight al-Qaeda in Iraq. But how will al-Qaeda in Iraq survive without our presence to attract recruits for jihad against the great Satan from the West?

In this connection, our alumnus Nicholas Thompson made a lovely point in a recent op-ed in the *New York Times*. He asked, wouldn't we be better off not constantly seeking confrontation with radical Islam? The more we become the enemy, the more their forces seem to grow. Thompson asked, why don't we let them self-destruct just as communism did? They have sown the seeds of their own demise by their suppression of women and homosexuals and by their denial of the right of people to think and speak for themselves.

What, we have to wear uniforms too?

Two news stories provide hints of the state of today's Iraqi army. One, by Greg Jaffe of the *Wall Street Journal*, describes how Iraqi army Brigadier General Falah Hassan Kinbar "barely escaped a kidnap attempt by the Mahdi Army, a radical Shiite militia," during which "more than a dozen of the moderate Shiite general's own men betrayed him." An American colonel told Jaffe that the general is "one of the few military commanders up here who refuses to violate his own principles and work with the Mahdi Army. That's why they want to kill him." Brigadier General Kinbar says, "I want to do my duty. But I am very sure my own government will abandon me." He wants the Americans to help him escape and relocate. "Any country," he pleads. "Any country."

In the other story, by the Associated Press, the good news is that the Iraqi army is enjoying recruiting success. The bad news is how they're doing it. Recruits are being promised that they will not be sent far from home.

"They want to serve Iraq," an American colonel explains, "but they wanted to do it in the local area."

Just how a national army can function if its soldiers can't be sent to all parts of the country is not explained. But, before the change in the recruiting rules, "U.S. officials were finding that after joining and going through training, many new Iraqi soldiers would quit after learning they were to be assigned to a post far from their homes."

It might help our own Army increase its number of recruits if they were told they could stay near home in Alabama or Wyoming or wherever and not have to go to a place called Iraq. But you have to suspect that our soldiers who have been sent to Iraq wonder a bit about the dedication of their Iraqi counterparts, for whom American lives are being risked far from home.

Keep up the bad work?

As for the Iraqi police, according to a report in the *New York Times*, we have failed so abysmally with their training that "we should start over." We have now had four and a half years to train the Iraqi police and army. What about our conspicuous lack of success during all that time makes us confident that we know how to do the job now? And if we leave some soldiers behind to do the training, who is going to protect them? More guards from Blackwater?

The third-tour test

Since I hope that someone will give a copy of what I'm writing now to all the Democratic candidates, I ask your forgiveness for repeating a couple of other points.

As to the argument that a mutual slaughter of Sunnis and Shiites might follow our departure if we don't stay long enough, the British had a presence in India for more than 100 years, behaving more wisely than most colonial powers. Still, when they left, the Hindus and Muslims engaged in a mutual slaughter that killed more than a million people.

Finally, I ask our Democratic leaders the same question I posed at the end of this column two months ago. Are they confident enough that our staying in Iraq will lead to a peaceful, stable, and democratic country that they are willing to assure each soldier leaving for Iraq for the third or fourth tour that it is worth risking his life again—every day, for fifteen more months?

Soldiers' shoes

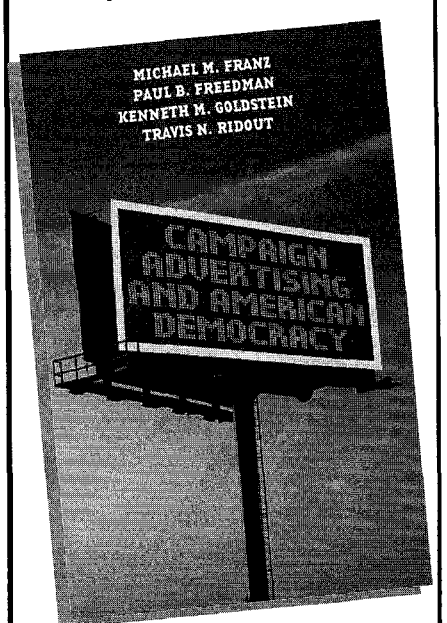
It seems incredible to me that at least thirteen Republicans wouldn't stand with the Democrats to demand that soldiers at least be given fifteen months at home before being sent back to Iraq. Why can't they put themselves in the shoes of those soldiers?

Of course, the soldier will tell you that he's ready to go back. He wants to do his duty. But can you really doubt that in his inner soul he wants to live, and to live as a whole human being, with all his limbs, a brain that still works, and a face that isn't disfigured?

When I was thirteen, I went to military school. I was miserable. But when a friend visited me, I felt I had to put on a brave front. I told him I loved it. WM

Charles Peters is the founding editor of the *Washington Monthly*.

Surprising findings about the positive effects of political advertising



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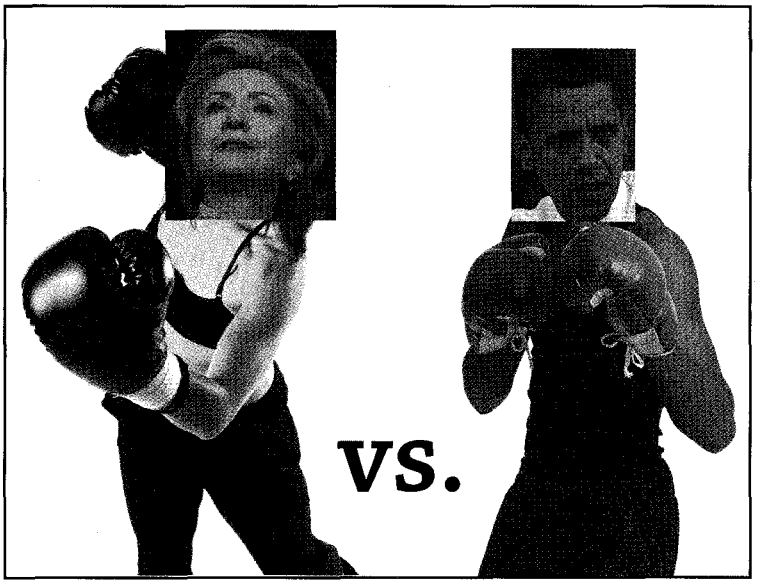
Tale of the Tape

THE *WASHINGTON MONTHLY* MEASURES UP THE HEAVYWEIGHTS IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

HILLARY "DONE DEAL" CLINTON

Height: 5'6"
Reach: National
Weight (Wait): Since the health care defeat of 1994
Fighting style: Stays to the center of the ring, hard to pin in corner
In her corner: Bill Clinton, Mark Penn, Patti Solis Doyle, Mandy Grunwald, Howard Wolfson, Harold Ickes, Terry McAuliffe, Tamera Luzzatto, Angelo Dundee, the Republican establishment

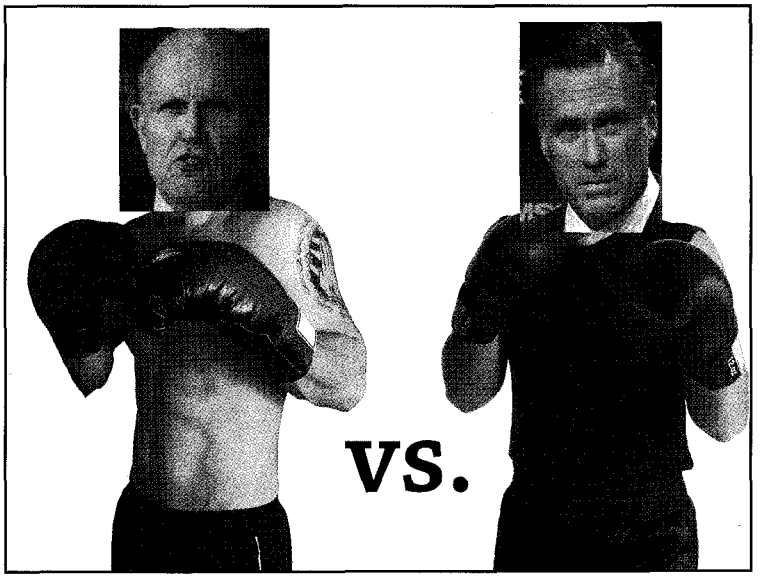


BARACK "PROFESSOR PUGILIST" OBAMA

Height: 6'1"
Reach: International, possibly interplanetary
Weight (Wait): Since convention speech of 2004
Fighting style: Above the pettiness of our current boxing world
In his corner: Oprah

RUDY "QAEDA HATA" GIULIANI

Height: 5'10"
Reach: Anywhere Verizon can reach
Marriages: Three, to the discomfort of his Church
Hair: From combover to cue ball
Fighting style: Below the belt (savagely)



MITT "YOU CAN CALL ME MITT" ROMNEY

Height: 6'2"
Reach: Anywhere you want him to reach
Marriages: One, to the discomfort of his Church
Hair: As rich and pliant as the candidate from whom it sprouts
Fighting style: Below the belt (obligingly)

THE UNDERCARD

- What many consider the main event: Jeri vs. Judy
- Bill Richardson vs. Joe Biden in the "We Coulda Been Contenders Bout"
- Mike Huckabee vs. Dennis Kucinich, bantamweight division

Jeff Nussbaum is a principal in the speechwriting and strategy firm West Wing Writers. **Eric Schnure** is a freelance speechwriter and an adjunct professor at American University. **Dan Goor** is an Emmy Award–winning writer for *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*. They write collectively as the **Humor Cabinet**, and can be reached at comments@humorcabinet.com.

Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Rudy Giuliani, and Mitt Romney: Getty Images

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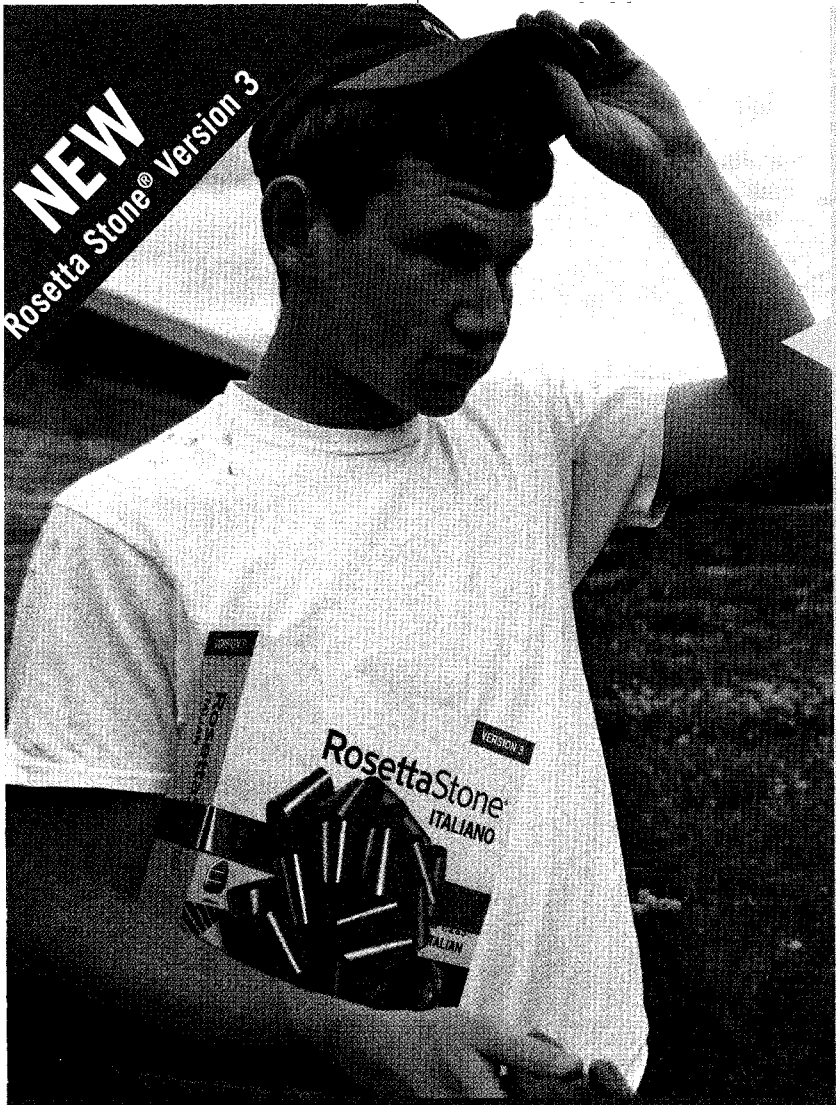

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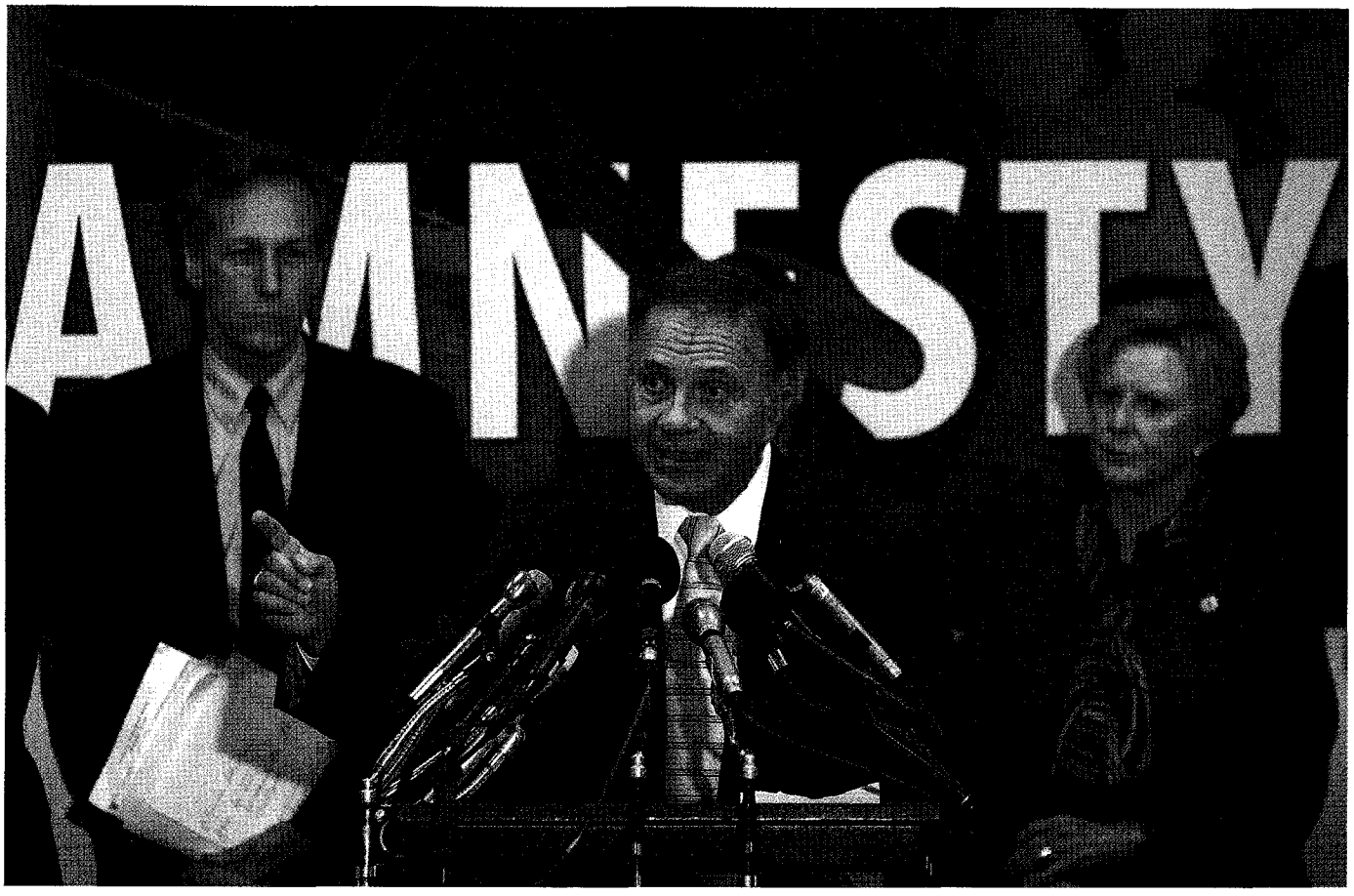
THE *Monthly* INTERVIEW



Win McNamee / Getty Images

Tom Tancredo

Just as conservative strategist Grover Norquist admires Vladimir Lenin, hard-core progressives might learn a thing or two from Tom Tancredo. The Colorado congressman and long-shot presidential candidate has for years been pushing for a restrictionist policy on immigration. His efforts have finally paid off. In 2006, the GOP House embraced a hard-line stance on border control as its strategy for winning the midterm elections. This year, presidential candidates are finding that immigration has become a litmus-test issue in the Republican primaries. Admittedly, Tancredo's triumph is not necessarily good for the GOP—the party's antics in Congress in 2006 undid years of effort by Karl Rove to welcome Hispanics into the Republican fold—but it nevertheless stands as a case study in how an extremist position can reshape an entire party's political debate. Tancredo recently explained to the *Washington Monthly*'s Markos Kounalakis and Peter Laufer how it's done.

WM: Why have you become a pariah?

TT: Well, I am perhaps the most visible member of Congress—and certainly now the most visible person running for president of the United States—on the issue of immigration. What happens is, you provide people with some space to get into where they can say, "That guy is a racist xenophobe. That guy is just so crazy that we can take a more moderate stance." To tell you the truth, that's okay with me. It is not the worst thing in the world to have changed the debate so significantly, at least among Republicans running for office, that they are willing to say things like "We will secure the border" and "We will go after employers." That's the moderate position now.

WM: How has the administration responded to that shift?

TT: The last attempt that the administration put all its hope in, a Senate bill a couple of months ago, the president said to everyone, "This is what's going to pass, I'll see you at the signing ceremony." That's what he said. And the leadership of the House and Senate were all agreeing to it. But something happened that I haven't seen since I've been in Congress. The phones at the Senate offices were shut down because of overload. On Tuesday, we had only thirty-six senators on our side, and on

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Thursday, we had fifty-three. Every single vote that changed was a senator running for reelection in 2008. Thank God for talk radio and the Internet!

WM: Where do we come together on this? How do those of us who disagree with you—and that includes us—find a way to solve our lack of control of the southern border?

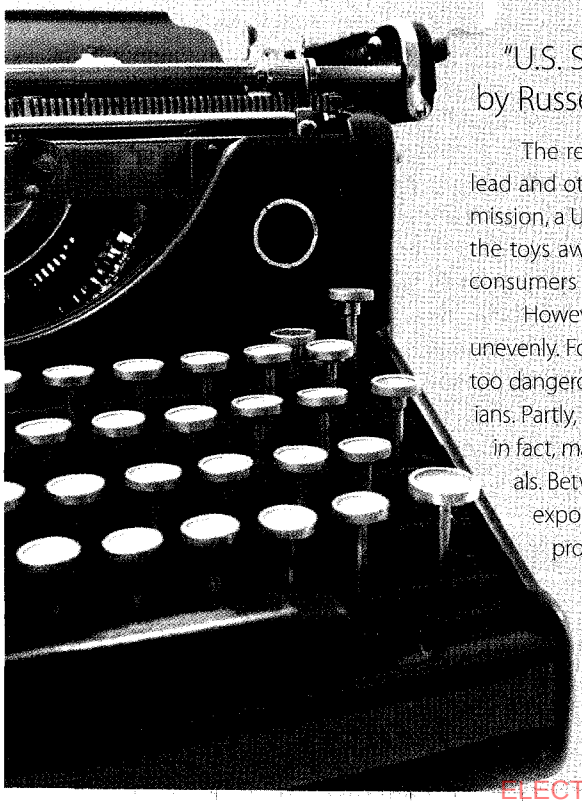
TT: I don't want it to sound trite, but I do not for the life of me understand why we could not accomplish exactly what you said by simply saying, "We will enforce the law." We call ourselves a nation of law, we believe that is one of the founding principles of the country. We have a law that says you can't come into the country illegally; we have another law that says you cannot obtain a job if you are here illegally. If you enforce those laws, then from my point of view you have solved the problem. Why isn't that a compromise?

WM: You know, it's an irritatingly difficult point to contradict.

TT: Well, that's made my day, hearing that! Of course, I understand the world in which I operate. I have a friend from when I was in the state legislature many years ago who had once worked for a union. And he said that you would go in and scream for red revolution and settle for an increase in the pension plan. To a large extent, that is what is happening. I have to set the bar as high as I can. I'm being completely candid with you. If I had actually set out to become president, then of course it would be ludicrous for me to do it in the way I'm doing it. I don't have that as my goal; I never have. The only way I can get on that plane and go to Iowa or New Hampshire and spend night after night in hotels in places you've never even heard of is by saying, "Think about why you're doing this, Tom. It is because the issue is important. You are the person that is advancing it." I have the luxury of saying, "I will set the goalposts as far as I can down the field because then I will have a better chance of getting the game played on my side." In one recent debate, we spent the first thirty-five minutes on immigration. That has never happened before. It's wonderful—I've got the two top guys attacking each other. Romney can spend a great deal of money, and he is enormously articulate, and the fact that he will take on Giuliani on this issue—I have to tell you, I don't get many questions, I stand there like a bookend for most of the debates, but it's still enormously gratifying. WM

Markos Kounalakis, the president of the *Washington Monthly,* and author **Peter Laufer,** the magazine's broadcast editor, host the weekly program *Washington Monthly on the Radio,* from which this interview was excerpted. The show can be heard on XM Radio station 130, P.O.T.U.S. '08, and on our flagship station, Progressive Talk 1260 AM in Washington, D.C. For a list of other stations or to listen online, visit www.washingtonmonthly.com.

THE *Monthly* JOURNALISM AWARD



"U.S. Ships Unsafe Products"
by Russell Carollo, *Sacramento Bee*, September 9, 2007

The recent revelation that Toys "R" Us has been importing Chinese toys contaminated with lead and other dangerous chemicals caused a national furor. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, a U.S. government agency charged with regulating product safety, warned parents to take the toys away from children immediately, saying that the agency was "committed to protecting consumers and families."

However, *Sacramento Bee* staff writer Russell Carollo discovered that the CSPC applies its concern unevenly. For years, it has allowed American companies to export unsafe goods; products considered too dangerous for Americans are deemed to be perfectly safe for Venezualans, Grenadans, and Brazilians. Partly, this is due to lax legislation—only 13 percent of the law's "mandatory" safety standards are, in fact, mandatory. The real problem, however, appears to be CPSC's permissive approach to approvals. Between October 1993 and September 2006, CPSC received more than a thousand requests to export banned products, and it approved 96 percent of them. (The rejected requests included proposed shipments to Canada or Mexico, which the CPSC routinely denies because it's concerned the products might reenter the United States.) Even a CPSC commissioner, Thomas Moore, admitted that the agency "cannot claim much moral superiority over the Chinese, or any other foreign country, when it comes to our own export policy." WM

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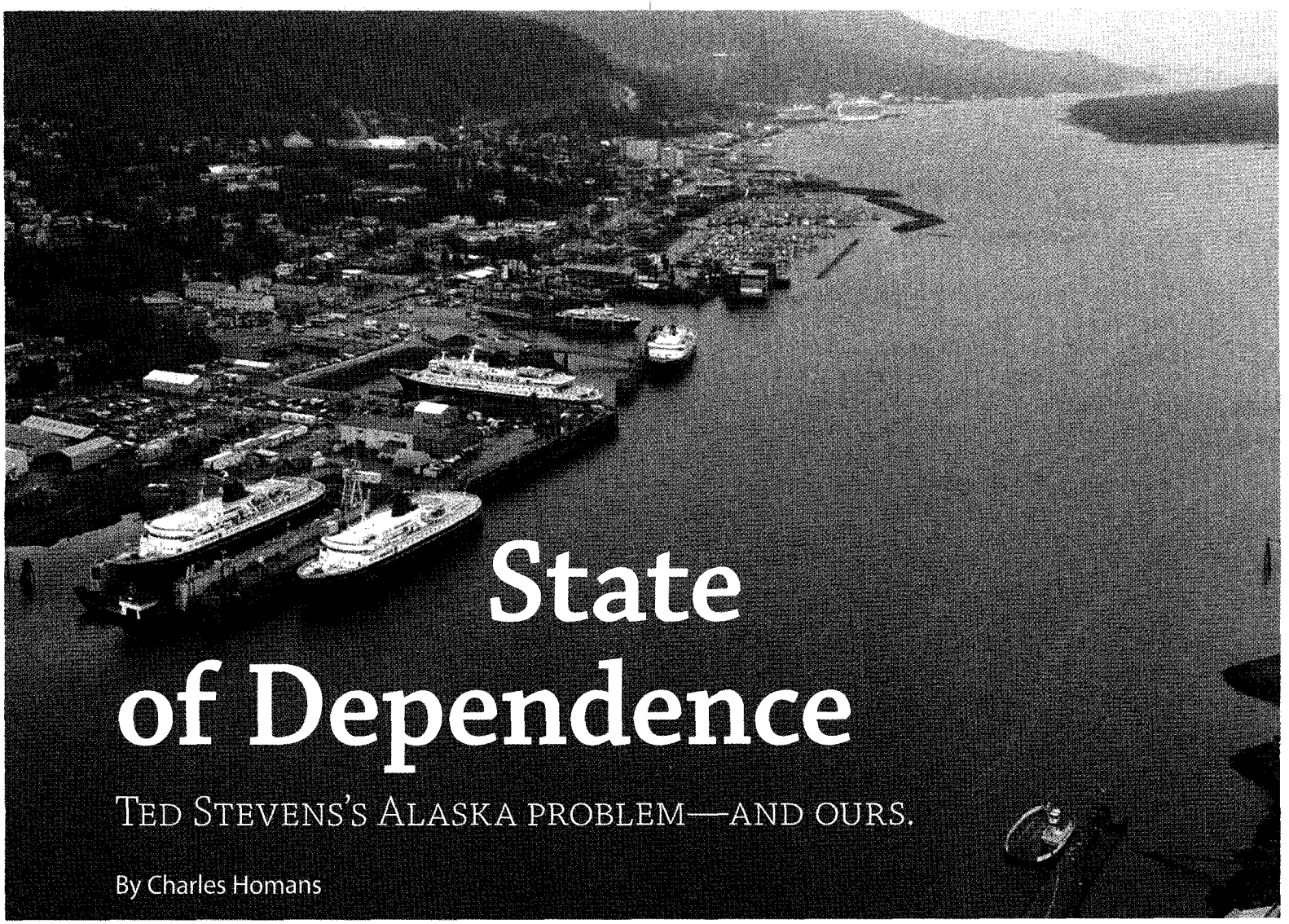

State of Dependence

Ted Stevens's Alaska problem—and ours.

By Charles Homans

Ketchikan, the fifth largest city in Alaska, is situated on a narrow strip of land, eight miles long and seven blocks wide, wedged between the waters of the Tongass Narrows and the hilly, forested interior of Revillagigedo Island. The town of 8,000 people grew up as a small port on Alaska's Inside Passage, and getting to it by means other than water has always been difficult. Forty years ago, when Ketchikan hosted a thriving timber industry, the only way to reach the place by air was to fly first to Annette Island, twelve miles to the southeast, where you strapped yourself into a thirty-eight-foot amphibious aircraft called the Grumman Goose, a cartoonishly bulbous dual-propeller plane with a boatlike hulled fuselage hanging below a forty-nine-foot wingspan. The Goose's landing gear was raised and lowered with a hand crank, and in bad weather, occupying one of the plane's seven seats was like riding inside a yo-yo. But the craft could land at sea and taxi up to the docks that line the Ketchikan waterfront, and, at the time, the town had few other options.

Things hadn't gotten any easier by the 1970s, when the Alaska Department of Transportation decided to provide Ketchikan with an airport. Searching for a feasible spot on which to build, planners eventually settled on an island called Gravina, just on the other side of the Tongass Narrows. Getting to Gravina would require a boat ride, but state officials indicated that a bridge span would one day link city to airport. In the meantime, ferries would shuttle passengers and freight the half mile from Gravina Island to the Ketchikan waterfront.

As tourism began to pick up in Alaska, Ketchikan became the state's southernmost port of call for cruise ships, and by 2004 the ferry service between Ketchikan and Gravina was carrying more than 300,000 passengers a year. Ketchikan was also gaining inhabitants, and, since the town was hemmed in by water on one side and unforgiving topography and federally managed forests on the other, developers were eyeing the flat land on Gravina Island as the most promising place to build. Without a bridge to Ketchikan, however, no one was likely to move there. With all this in mind, the Department of Transportation finally took up the bridge project in earnest, and the local government put its seal of approval on a plan that would cost roughly $250 million.

Then things took a quintessentially Alaskan turn. The DOT picked a more expensive alternative design, increasing the price tag of the project to more than $300 million. And Washington got involved. In August 2005, at the apex of the earmarking bonanza of the 109th Congress, Senator Ted Stevens, then chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and Representative Don Young, then chairman of the House Transportation Committee, steered $229 million in federal money toward the Ketchikan bridge project. When Hurricane Katrina prompted

Associated Press

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Republican Senate colleague Tom Coburn of Oklahoma to suggest diverting the bridge money toward rebuilding efforts in the Gulf, Stevens threw a tantrum, accusing Coburn of attacking Alaska's sovereignty and vowing that he would "be taken out of here on a stretcher" before allowing the funds to be redirected. (Alaska got its money, and the stretcher remained unused.) Thus was born the Bridge to Nowhere.

It wasn't that Ketchikan didn't deserve any federal money to build the bridge. In order to grow and accommodate its development, the town needed more land, and Washington has been funding large infrastructure projects around the country for decades. Still, even by the standards of federal earmarks, the Gravina project was unique in the enormity of the subsidy per capita, which was more than $17,000 per Ketchikan Gateway Borough resident. (By way of comparison, Boston's Big Dig project, which has become synonymous with pork-barrel politics and overspending, is estimated to have cost less than a fifth of this per Greater Boston resident.)

Two years on, the Bridge to Nowhere has gone from the drawing board to the dustbin—in September, the project was scrapped on the orders of Sarah Palin, Alaska's new governor. But it has lived on as a political symbol. In the Republican rout of 2006, it was an oft-invoked icon of government spending run amok.

To reduce the Bridge to Nowhere to a punch line, however, is to miss an important point. Life on the Last Frontier is complicated and expensive, and you pay for it. More precisely, we all pay for it, with about $8 billion a year in federal expenditures. Much of this subsidization is legitimate: the State of Alaska is only forty-eight years old, making it comparatively young, and it needs a boost in order to catch up to the rest of the country in development and infrastructure. But such legitimate demands become a pretext for federal handouts that are out of all proportion to any actual need.

Simply put, Alaska has made a habit of transferring its operating costs to the federal government. The state pulls out nearly two times as much money as it pitches in to the Treasury, a drain that looks especially bad in light of the state's fiscal reality. Today, Alaska enjoys a healthy budget surplus, and it sits on a Permanent Fund of more than $39 billion. It also refuses to levy sales or income taxes on its citizens. In a state that fails to pull its weight, the Bridge to Nowhere is just an especially weighty example.

This is often presumed to be the legacy of Ted Stevens, a lawmaker so eminent in his home state that he is known there simply as Uncle Ted. The senator is a legend of the Last Frontier, a reliable provider whose constituents regard him, in the words of veteran Alaskan journalist Michael Carey, as "something of a frontier fertility god—worshipped, propitiated, feared."

In Washington, journalists label Stevens with a less flattering nickname: the King of Pork. In recent months, Stevens has garnered media attention for even less desirable reasons: he is currently entangled (though yet to be charged) in a federal corruption investigation that has snared three lawmakers and lobbyists (with more indictments pending) back in Alaska on charges of conspiracy and bribery. But Stevens is better known for what he has done legally, parceling out federal dollars for projects like the Bridge to Nowhere. During one year at the peak of his powers as the head appropriator in the Senate, Stevens pulled in $705 million for Alaska in earmarks alone—more than what any other state received, on a per capita basis. And that figure is dwarfed by the support structure that Stevens has helped engineer—a Byzantine network of subsidies, loopholes, and Alaska-specific federal programs—that has funneled billions of dollars more in Alaska's direction.

Reform-minded citizens could be excused for hoping that the eventual departure of the eighty-three-year-old Stevens, whenever it happens, and the political shake-ups in his home state will put an end to the excess. But it's not so much that Alaska's problem is Ted Stevens as that Ted Stevens's problem is Alaska. If Stevens is guilty of anything, it is of being unusually good at meeting the outsize demands that his outsize state places on the shoulders of anyone representing it in Washington.

Life on the Last Frontier is complicated and expensive, and you pay for it. More precisely, we all pay for it.

For decades, Stevens has been directing financial aid to Alaska in the hopes of laying the groundwork for the independence and economic self-sustenance that he and other advocates of Alaskan statehood, half a century ago, declared to be within Alaska's reach. But the more Stevens has provided, the more dependent Alaska has grown. The reasons for this lie as much in Juneau as in Washington, and the eventual retirement or indictment of Stevens is unlikely to do much to alleviate Alaska's massive drain on the federal Treasury, a sum that constitutes a third of the state's economy. Stevens certainly perpetuated and expanded America's biggest welfare state. But he didn't create the problem, and getting rid of him won't undo it.

When did Alaska become the American taxpayer's burden? The short answer is that it always was. In 1912, the *Washington Post* declared Alaska to be "more dependent on Congress than any other part of the United States outside of the District of Columbia." University of Alaska historian Terrence Cole has estimated that with the exception of two decades in the nineteenth century (when the Treasury spent little in the territory and reaped considerable revenues off the fur seal harvest in the Pribilof Islands) and a few years in the late 1970s and early '80s (when high oil prices exploded Alaska's state coffers), Alaska

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has always cost the federal government money. By the most recent figures available, the United States spends $1.87 on Alaska for every dollar it collects in Alaskan taxes.

From the earliest years of the territory, getting anything done properly in Alaska has been difficult. When a publisher's assistant named Ivan Petroff was asked to conduct the first-ever U.S. Census of Alaska's population in 1880, he found the task of traveling to the far reaches of a territory one-fifth the size of the continental United States and fraught with mountain ranges, volcanic islands, and frozen tundra to be too overwhelming. Instead, he stayed home and made up the numbers, possibly underestimating the non-Native population by a factor of two.

More than a century later, Alaska is no less enormous and only somewhat less daunting. Much of it remains inaccessible by road, and all of it is miles from anything else. What limited economic activity can take place there is for the most part too capital intensive for all but the largest companies, and any work they do in Alaska is only of the sort that can't be moved elsewhere: oil drilling, mining, fishing, or logging. "Alaska is a long-term, massive operation, conditioned by its inaccessibility, and its ferocious terrain," a British journalist visiting the territory in 1958 wrote. "It is proper meat for the great corporations with capital the size of national debts and machines and helicopters and dedicated graduates from mining schools."

That Alaska became a state in spite of these obvious economic impediments is a testament to the spirit of the era in which it happened. Statehood was a grand experiment, organized around the thesis that if the territory were given a modern government, a modern economy and society would develop accordingly. "Like the tail fin and the Hula hoop, the State of Alaska is an artifact from the Eisenhower era, a profession of optimism in a world of limitless possibilities," Terrence Cole writes. Statehood was also viewed by its advocates as a moral imperative. "It was this feeling that there's more to this than whether we can afford it," says Vic Fischer, one of four surviving coauthors of Alaska's 1956 constitution. "We want to have control of our resources. We want to be able to vote."

At the time, Alaska was flush with the most massive infusion of federal cash in the history of the territory: the post–World War II boom in defense spending, which constituted the near entirety of the state's economy in the '50s and transformed Anchorage and Fairbanks into modern cities. The era was also one of unprecedented political responsibility in the state. In 1949, the territorial legislature had finally passed an income tax, and by the early '50s it had balanced its budget. This was taken as proof that Alaska was capable of both governing and financing its own affairs, and Congress was beginning to entertain the idea of statehood.

In its first decade, Alaska's nonfederal economy resembled a giant craps game, and there was no guarantee the state would come out ahead. The military money was about the only thing keeping the state in the black—Alaska's prewar economy, built tenuously on salmon canning and mining, had all but disappeared. "Today Alaska could be described with almost equal accuracy as one of the most excitingly promising and one of the most hopelessly declining economic areas under the American flag," Alaska Division of Planning consultant George Rogers concluded in his 1962 analysis, *The Future of Alaska*. "The characterization will depend on your point of view and the length of your look into the future." The state was saved from insolvency by an enormous lucky break: in 1968, the largest oil reserves in the United States were discovered on Alaska's North Slope at Prudhoe Bay, land that belonged to the state and not the federal government. Later that year, a new senator named Ted Stevens would arrive in Washington to help the state make the most of its sudden fortune.

Theodore Fulton Stevens was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1923, but he didn't stay there long. Divorce and the Great Depression dissolved his family when he was six, and Stevens spent his childhood bouncing between family members in Chicago, Indianapolis, and, eventually, Manhattan Beach, California. During World War II, he flew cargo planes over the Himalayas, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the war, Stevens attended UCLA and Harvard Law School, where he developed an expertise in maritime law. In the early '50s, Stevens's ambitions centered on Washington, but when a job in the Eisenhower administration failed to materialize, Stevens accepted an offer from a law firm in Fairbanks and a $600 loan to help him and his wife, Ann, get there. In the winter of 1953, the Stevenses pulled into Fairbanks in a 1947 Buick.

Ted Stevens quickly came to love the territory. Before long, he had become an ardent advocate for statehood. When he finally landed a job in Eisenhower's Interior Department and returned to Washington in 1956, it was as an insurgent. Even as he was working as legislative counsel at Interior, he was lobbying in Congress for Alaskan statehood. (Years later, Stevens would admit in an interview that this was illegal.) Two years after Stevens arrived back in Washington, on July 7, 1958, Eisenhower signed the Alaska Statehood Act into law.

In 1961, Stevens returned to Alaska, serving in the Alaska House of Representatives and mounting two failed U.S. Senate bids. (Any clairvoyant with a sense of irony would have been amused to hear Stevens attack the incumbent senator, Ernest Gruening, for being a "cantankerous old man.") In 1968, he made it to Washington anyway, when Senator Bob Bartlett suffered a fatal heart attack and, at the urging of President-elect Nixon, Alaska Governor Wally Hickel tapped Stevens to fill his seat.

Once in Washington, Stevens distinguished himself with a sense of pragmatism and an eye for the long game. One of his most lasting accomplishments came in his first elected term in the Senate, when he brokered a solution to a crucial problem that threatened to complicate Alaska's newfound oil windfall. Oil companies wanted to build a pipeline to bring North Slope crude to market, but they were wary of a Damocles' sword hanging over the project: Alaskan Natives had ancestral lands that lay along the pipeline route, and this created

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the potential for costly land claims lawsuits. Stevens, who had worked with the oil companies and (pro bono) with Native groups as a lawyer in Anchorage in the '60s, found a way to bridge the parties. The result was the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, a paradigm-shifting piece of legislation that ceded land and cash to newly created Native-owned corporations in exchange for their go-ahead on the pipeline.

The law made the large-scale development of the North Slope possible—Congress passed a pipeline act two years later—and created a class of wealthy and politically powerful Native leaders who remain some of Stevens's most dedicated allies. (Stevens subsequently tinkered with the law, loosening the requirements that the corporations' subsidiaries be Native managed, and entitling them to get lucrative no-bid contracts with the federal government. [See Ben Wallace-Wells, "Polar Fleeced," July/August 2005, *Washington Monthly*.] The result has been a boom in federally funded contracting jobs for white Alaskans in Anchorage.)

Awash in oil money, Alaska's state leaders spent freely in the '70s and early '80s. Rural Alaska, in which conditions were dubbed "Stone Age" by one Native leader, found itself catapulted into the late twentieth century. Villages finally began to acquire basic amenities like water and sewer systems, and even communities of only a few thousand people had multimillion-dollar schools lavished upon them.

In the midst of this fiscal euphoria, Juneau managed to make one very good decision. Determined not to perpetuate its habit of squandering the annual oil windfalls, the state legislature used a portion of the North Slope revenues to create an investment fund whose principal was untouchable. To this day, the Permanent Fund, as it is known, continues to grow, and is currently worth more than $39 billion.

But as the oil boom rolled on, acts of prudence became the exception rather than the rule. In 1980, the state began paying out annual dividends from the Permanent Fund to every man, woman, and child in Alaska (typically in the neighborhood of $1,000), siphoning off hundreds of millions of dollars from the state's coffers each year. That same year, the legislature made things worse by abolishing the state's income tax, making Alaska the only state in the union with taxes on neither income nor sales. It was a bad idea. Without knowing it, Alaska had laid the groundwork for a new kind of federal dependency, one that would paradoxically arise from the state's newfound fortune.

Alaska's bill soon came due, when OPEC relaxed the restraints on its production and oil prices descended from the heights they had reached in the Jimmy Carter years. By 1986, the state's government, which now relied almost entirely on oil money, faced a unique dilemma. On paper, Alaska was rich: the Permanent Fund account had passed the $5 billion mark two years earlier. But that money remained untouchable as the Prudhoe Bay revenues plummeted, and the state became effectively broke. Alaska's budget shrank by nearly half, unemployment rose to 11 percent, and a state that in 1975 had attracted 30,000 new residents was now hemorrhaging 15,000 of them a year. The 2,200-person community of Barrow, which depended on local government for 95 percent of its employment, racked up a $1.3 billion deficit. Faced with fiscal crisis, the state turned to Uncle Ted.

At the time, Stevens was not in much better shape than his state. His marriage to Ann, known as one of the happiest in the Senate, was cut short in 1978, when she died in a plane crash. In December of 1980 Stevens had remarried, but his personal finances were soon battered by bad investments in cattle ranching and crab fishing, and he was forced to sell his house in Maryland.

Politically, however, Stevens was well positioned to help out his constituents. In the '80s he won notoriety for his use of his seat on the Appropriations Committee, tacking inventive earmarks and other forms of spending for Alaska on to bills moving through the Senate. When the U.S. Army formed a new division to combat extremists in the developing world, for instance, Stevens contrived to have it stationed in Anchorage. Thanks to Stevens, the division's mission was transformed from low-intensity overseas operations into defense of the forty-ninth state.

Alaska's future, and the future of its relationship to the federal government, depends on Alaskans recapturing the political maturity they once demonstrated.

As Stevens became more adept at tapping federal revenues, however, Alaska seemed to become more helpless. In the first years of the state's fiscal crisis, cooler heads had suggested that the income tax be reintroduced. But the legislature flinched, and when the Gulf War brought a brief lift in oil prices, the idea was swept off the table. When budgetary shortfalls continued into the '90s, the state overspent its revenues by as much as a billion dollars a year while balancing its budget out of various other savings accounts. Instead of looking for ways to boost state revenues, however, Juneau kept waiting for help to come from Washington.

And, often thanks to Stevens, help kept coming. In 1997, Stevens assumed the chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee, and Alaska enjoyed its most bountiful run of federal funding yet. From 1983 to 1996, Alaskans had received $1,000 more in federal grants per capita than the average American; from 1996 to 2002, they received $3,000 more. Overall, in that two-decade span surveyed by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER)

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in 2003, federal spending in Alaska increased at three times the rate it did in the nation as a whole.

In the late 1990s, people began to refer to a problem called the "Alaska Disconnect": the high expectations Alaskans continued to have of government even as they failed to pay in properly. This fiscal dissonance was abetted by Stevens's largesse, but ultimately it wasn't his fault. The problem had been triggered the moment Alaska struck it rich with oil. Psychologically, it had been cemented with the fateful 1980 decision to abolish the income tax.

Through its continued aversion to basic taxation, Alaska had also created a warped anti-incentive for economic growth. In most states, job creation leads to more incomes and purchases. This has the effect of increasing tax revenue to the state treasury. In other words, improvements in public services and infrastructure help to promote economic growth, and vice versa. But in Alaska this wasn't the case after 1980. Ted Stevens could bring millions of dollars in infrastructure and services to his home state, but insofar as they attracted new residents or kept current ones the boons tended only to increase the fiscal troubles of Alaska's government. The new jobs and new people created an increased demand for public services, but, without proper taxes, the new jobs and new people didn't create new revenue streams. ISER has calculated that every job created in Anchorage thanks to economic development projects winds up imposing a net annual burden of $1,100 on the public purse each year. The more Washington helped to develop Alaska's economy, the more Alaska's economy required Washington to help.

All of this had the effect of corroding the idealism of the statehood movement. The dream that Ted Stevens and other founding Alaskans had harbored had been one of genuine self-determination, however fragile. Today, what has replaced it is a libertarian fantasy that political scientist Thomas Morehouse has dubbed "dependent individualism." This is largely the result of a still-pervasive Alaskan view that casts the state and its residents as aggrieved victims of the whims of the federal government, in spite of the fact that they benefit more from it financially than anyone else in the country.

This attitude—a steroidal version of the historical anti-federalism of the American West—is an echo of Alaska's late territorial era, when the state really was a functional colony of the United States. It has calcified, however, into a reflexive argument for a kind of perpetual reparations to the state, reparations that have become irrationally huge.

Consider King Cove, a village of 800 people on the remote Alaska Peninsula. In 1998, the town decided it wanted a road built to Cold Bay, a nearby community of fewer than a hundred people with an airport that made access to medical facilities possible. Since the road would have had to pass through the federally protected Izembek Wildlife Refuge, though, Congress wouldn't permit it to be built. In recompense, it granted King Cove $37.5 million for local clinic upgrades and a state-of-the-art hovercraft that could be used to transit the wildlife refuge without the benefit of a road. Nine years later, King Cove has the hovercraft but complains that it doesn't have the money to operate it for more than a few years. As if the multimillion-dollar handout had never happened, the village renewed its request for a road last summer. It is a very Alaskan story: the need is genuine, but the remedy is excessive (the $37.5 million subsidy from Congress amounted to almost $50,000 per inhabitant). And the local government, conditioned by easy access to the federal Treasury, responds with more demands.

Along the way, Alaska's pattern of federal reliance has long since stopped being a matter of necessity and simply become habit. The state has continued to behave as if it were on the brink of economic failure even after 2002, when high oil prices once again balanced the state's books and then some (the state's budget surplus will probably top $100 million for the current fiscal year). In 1998, Stevens had created a joint state-federal entity called the Denali Commission, which was intended to provide a wide array of support for infrastructure and services in Alaska. But the federal money—sometimes as much as $150 million a year—that Congress pumped into the commission went unmatched by the state even after it had bounced back from the fiscal crisis. Alaska now feels it is simply entitled to such support.

Ultimately, the sense of entitlement even seems to have infected Stevens personally. Long known for being an impecunious senator in a club of millionaires, Stevens had never shown much interest in accumulating riches. Nevertheless, after acquiring the chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee, he became wealthy with an unseemly haste. Beneficiaries of Stevens's federal largesse had helped in a variety of ways. One, a real estate contractor, made Stevens a partner in real estate investments, turning $50,000 into more than $750,000 in six years. Another, an Alaska Native corporation, paid $6 million a year to lease an office building owned by Stevens and his partners. This year, newspapers reported that the FBI and a federal grand jury were investigating Stevens for remodeling performed on his home in Anchorage that was overseen by the VECO Corporation, a curious hybrid of an oil field service company and lobbying firm.

Ted Stevens has been in national office for almost thirty-nine of Alaska's forty-eight years as a state, and for most of them discussion of what the state would look like without him has been taboo. This is not the case anymore. Stevens is not getting any younger, his powers in Washington have ebbed along with Republicans' dominance, and he is working with a federal investigation hanging over his head. Beyond all that, he is clearly aware that he is testing his fellow senators' limits. "As lawmakers in Congress weigh spending priorities and work to reduce our federal deficit, many take note of Alaska's annual budget surplus and the billions of dollars in our Permanent Fund," Stevens told the state legislature in his annual address in March. "To them, the question seems simple: If Alaskans are unwilling to invest in a project, why should the federal government?"

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Local lawmakers in rural Alaska, returning from their periodic lobbying pilgrimages to Washington this fall, say that they too are increasingly being urged by the delegation to look once again to the state, not the feds, for the money that has flowed freely from the Treasury in the past two decades.

While the end of the Stevens era will undoubtedly trim some of the fat off Alaska's pork, however, it will barely scratch the surface of a federal Alaska budget that is simply too deeply entrenched, too widely spread among federal agencies, to be significantly reduced by a single election. The comically extravagant spending examples that journalists and taxpayer watchdog groups love to trot out—$100 million for researching the energy-generating possibilities of the northern lights, $500,000 to paint a salmon on the side of an airplane—may pass into history with Uncle Ted. But even at their peak, those giveaways added up to only a tenth of the Treasury's annual Alaska bill.

All of this is not to say that Alaska doesn't deserve an above-average level of federal subsidies. The problem is that Alaska's dealings with Washington have become dishonest. Alaska has come a long way from its days as a noble, if highly improbable, political experiment—the state has $39 billion in the bank, and a reliable budget surplus. Every September, the governor of Alaska announces the dollar value of the Permanent Fund check that every Alaskan will receive, in an envelope-opening ceremony reminiscent of the Academy Awards. This year, the check totaled $1,654, an amount—if airlines' and car dealerships' annual dividend-pegged sales are any indication—that will be spent on vacations and new Fords. These images are so jarringly inconsistent with the scenes of neglect routinely conjured by the state's delegation on Capitol Hill that last year then Governor Frank Murkowski earnestly suggested Alaska hire a PR firm to clean up the image it had acquired as a freeloaders' paradise.

When Alaska's founders drafted the state's constitution, they did so in the hope that Alaskans would take responsibility for their own destiny. Instead, an oil boom led Alaska down a different road, one that Ted Stevens consistently found federal money to help pave. The state's future, and the future of its relationship with the federal government, depends on Alaskans recapturing the political maturity they once demonstrated. "I think that the income tax would be a progressive measure for Alaska, but beyond that it would make [Alaskans] better citizens," Vic Fischer says. Repealing it "has really been at the expense of civic responsibility." Propositions like this will, of course, remain politically poisonous until—and perhaps after—a crash in oil prices causes the state's fortunes to fall once again. But if the dreams of genuine independence are to have any hope of being realized, Alaska must begin to start paying for itself. That means Alaskans must want to be participants in, rather than wards of, their government—and that attitude may be the one thing Uncle Ted can't buy for them. WM

Charles Homans is a writer based in Alaska.

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THE SHOCK DOCTRINE

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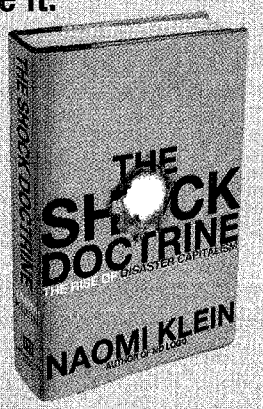

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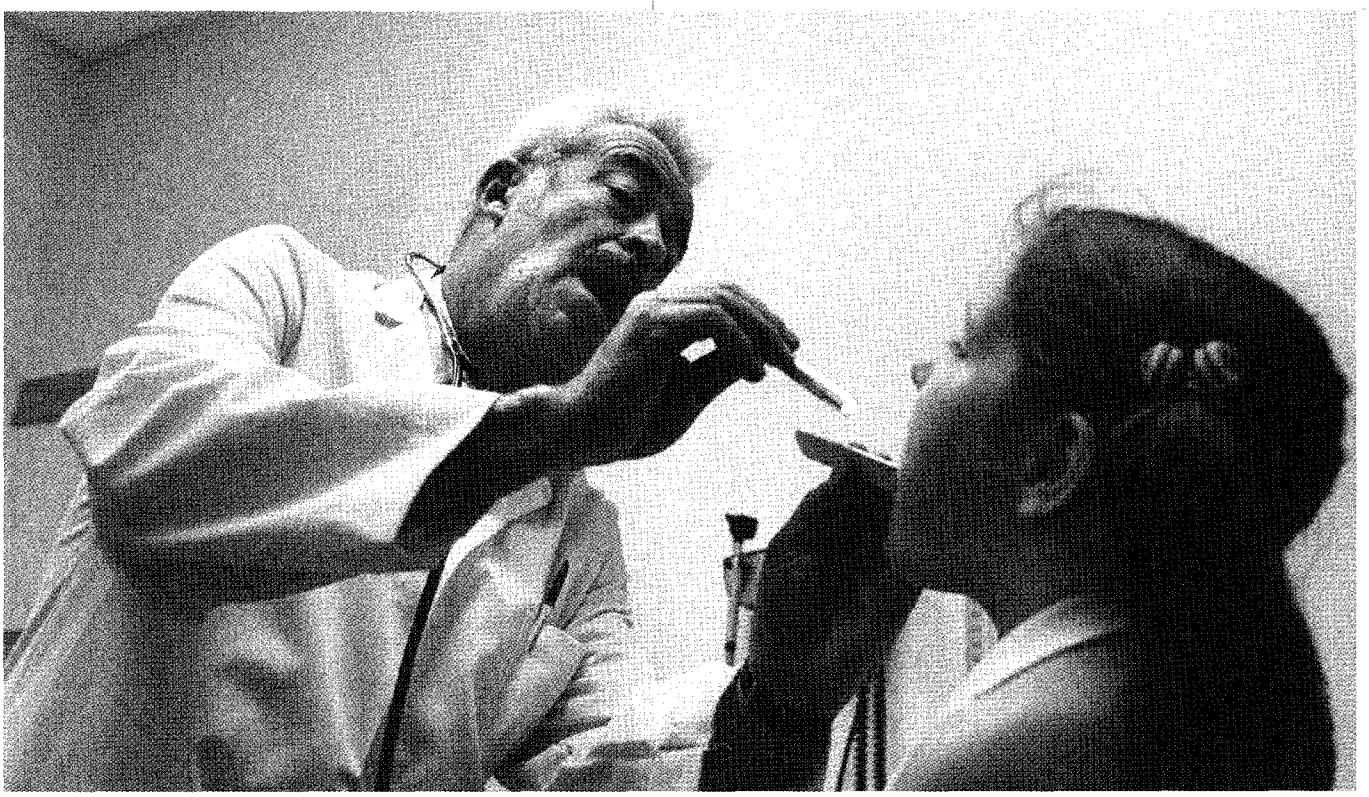

When Doctors Lose Patience

Primary care physicians keep costs down and quality up—and they're leaving the profession in droves.

By N. Thomas Connally

In 1999, shortly before I left private practice, I received a phone call from the wife of a patient in his early seventies. She feared that her husband was having some form of seizure or "epileptic event" during his sleep and wanted me to refer him to a neurologist or the sleep center at a nearby university. I had the couple come in right away. During the appointment, the man's wife explained that her husband had dramatic episodes of "moaning and groaning and kicking his feet" during his sleep at night. From several years of being their family doctor, I knew something of the man's habits, and I asked him how much he was drinking. "Three or four" martinis each night, was the answer, to which his wife added, "Heavy martinis." After doing a neurological examination (watching his gait and balance, checking strength and reflexes, and examining his eyes) and finding nothing wrong, I advised the man to have only one martini for each of the next five nights, then to quit all alcohol and see me again in about ten days. A couple of weeks later, the pair returned for a visit. This time, the wife reported that her husband was "sleeping like a baby." After a discussion of how to deal with the husband's possible alcohol problem, I arranged to see them a third time in three weeks to see if further counseling would be appropriate.

The cost to Medicare of the three visits to my office was slightly over $100. If the man had gone to a neurologist, he might have had an electroencephalogram or an MRI that would have cost at least $1,500. Consultation and overnight evaluation in the sleep center would have cost just as much. Instead, his problem was accurately diagnosed and addressed in the setting of an ongoing relationship where progress or regression could be monitored.

Episodes like this occur almost every day in the offices of properly trained and motivated internists and family practitioners. Areas of the United States where the most care is delivered by primary care physicians have lower overall costs, higher patient satisfaction, and, as a rule, better outcomes. A primary care doctor can be a trusted, friendly advisor who sees a patient over many years. When serious health

Heinz Kluetmeier / Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images

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problems strike, the primary care doctor can become the patient's medical shepherd, helping to guide him through a complicated system of specialists and hospitals.

In any rational health care system, primary care doctors are central to keeping quality of care high and costs low. Unfortunately, the system in the United States is far from rational, and the number of primary care doctors is plummeting. In 1949, 59 percent of doctors worked in primary care, but by 1995 that number was down to 37 percent. Over the past ten years, as many as one in five primary care providers have left the profession. There's a broad expert consensus that we face a critical shortage of general practitioners and that the problem is only getting worse.

Health care has become one of the major issues addressed by the current crop of presidential candidates, and each of the leading Democratic contenders has released a plan. None, however, has addressed the need to put primary care at the center of the American health care system. It's one thing to make sure everybody has health coverage. It's another to make sure that the coverage is good and, for the nation, affordable. Unless we wean ourselves off of an increasing reliance on specialists at the expense of primary care, we'll soon be a lot unhealthier and, with all of our spending, a lot poorer, too.

I went into medicine because I was interested both in the science of medicine and in the art of interacting with people. In Norfolk, Virginia, where I was raised, doctors were widely considered to be the most important people in the community, and I'd grown up admiring them. In 1954, I entered medical school at the University of Virginia, and I never doubted that I wanted to practice general internal medicine. At the time, that was considered to be the most intellectual part of medicine, a field in which one could be most like the great diagnosticians of the past.

In the 1960s, I did my national service in Washington, D.C., at the National Institutes of Health. I also met a woman (at Clyde's in Georgetown) whom I eventually married. Both of us liked D.C., and a very good practice opportunity for me turned up. So it was that I went into practice in 1968, joining a group of three older internists in an office on Eye Street.

This was a happy time. Our office had one of the most interesting groups of patients in the country, from waitresses to Supreme Court justices. The "annual physical" was a ritual, perhaps the major part of our income, and some of our patient charts extended back to the 1930s. A typical visit might take nearly an hour (in the case of the annual physical), and with the older patients I'd offer a careful update on their symptoms and my findings, as well as advice on lifestyle changes and medications. For any visit, we always allotted at least thirty minutes.

These were still prosperous years in the postwar boom, and most Americans had what was called "fee-for-service" or "indemnity" insurance coverage, meaning that their employers covered most of the premium and insurers picked up 80 percent of the cost. Patients could go to any health care provider or specialist they wanted and be reimbursed nearly without question. Many received good care, but the system depended on economic factors that weren't sustainable.

All of us felt the stagflation of the late 1970s, but the era also coincided with an especially sharp upsurge in health care costs. As journalist Shannon Brownlee explains in her book *Overtreated*, this led to a change in the way insurance companies did business. Experts noticed that certain entities—traditional health maintenance organizations, such as Kaiser Permanente—were managing to keep costs under control. Among the things HMOs did differently was to assign primary care providers a central role, setting yearly budgets for their clinics and hospitals and leaving it up to doctors to decide how best to prioritize their spending. Although HMOs rarely offered the latest in technology and kept visits to specialists to a minimum, researchers found that they provided care that was often superior to what other health facilities offered.

Insurers took note and tried to import the HMO model into their plans. But they wound up doing it in a shortsighted way. Instead of paying doctors fixed salaries, as Kaiser Permanente did, insurance companies paid them according to how many patients they saw. At the same time, they bargained with doctors and forced them to lower rates of insurance reimbursement. To compensate for the drop in revenue, doctors started to see more patients per hour to make up for the loss in income. Soon, patients began to notice the drop in personal attention, and many became unhappy. This poisoned relationships with primary care providers and helped push patients to seek out specialists.

Through the years my own practice felt these trends. My patient load increasingly comprised many elderly people, and Medicare, in an attempt to cut costs, was also lowering the fees it was willing to pay. This made things difficult, because while medical advances were helping everyone to live longer, my clients were also developing more complicated sets of problems. I was spending more and more time on these patients, even as Medicare was paying less and less for my services (certainly far less than for the annual physicals of old). While I'd grown very close to my existing patients, whom I'd gotten to know over decades as individual human beings, I also found that I was trying to avoid taking on new patients who weren't young and healthy. Medicare paid so little that I couldn't afford to do otherwise. Like fellow primary care providers, I also had to take on more patients in order to cover costs.

By the late 1990s, the pressure to see so many clients became too heavy. I was working about twelve hours a day, and, as I got into my sixties, I could recognize the physical signs of stress in myself. In 2000, I retired.

I wasn't the only one leaving the profession. I began to hear more and more stories of doctors who'd had enough and decided to get out of the field. They were finding the workload too high and the compensation too low. This

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problem will only increase. About a third of physicians are over the age of fifty-five, and, without a sudden easing of their burdens, many, if not most, will be tempted to retire sooner rather than later.

That will leave us with a severe shortage of physicians, because young medical professionals aren't replacing those who are leaving. Today, students from medical school typically graduate with about $130,000 in debt (far more than students in my generation owed, even adjusting for inflation) and know that choosing a high-paying specialty will allow them to pay it off many years sooner. There's also a prestige gap between primary care, once considered the crème de la crème of medicine, and what is now viewed as the more attractive position of specialist. Professor Thomas Bodenheimer of the University of California in San Francisco has noted that between 1997 and 2005, the number of U.S. graduates entering family practice residencies dropped by 50 percent.

At the same time, those who do choose to remain at their posts are finding, as I did, that their work is getting even harder and less rewarding. Doctors are rushed, leaving them unable to develop much of a relationship with their patients over time. Also, as a legacy of HMO efforts in the 1990s to reward doctors for denying clients access to specialty care, patients trust their physicians less and less, viewing their doctor mainly as a gatekeeper to the care they "really" need. As a result, doctors today tend to give in to patients who want to see specialists, whatever the costs to the system. It's much easier to send a patient to an orthopedist than to take a few extra minutes to talk to a patient with a frozen shoulder about the use of heat, simple exercises, and an inexpensive anti-inflammatory drug.

As primary care providers exit the scene, patients make bad choices. Some pay unnecessary visits to emergency rooms, which is far and away the most expensive way to deliver medical care. (This also means that other patients with true emergencies, such as acute coronaries, are often not promptly or effectively handled.) Others delay seeking necessary medical care, simply because they don't know how to find the right specialist for an acute problem such as a painful abdomen. And still others wind up visiting an array of specialists for mundane problems. (It is often under-fifty patients with high-end insurance who use this option, thinking they'll get the "best care available.") But relying on expensive specialists, while preferable to forgoing all medical care, is much less effective over the long run than going to a single doctor whom a patient knows and trusts. In studies undertaken at the Dartmouth Medical School, researchers have found that the best health care has little to do with high expenditure and much to do with placing primary care at the center of patient treatment.

It is part of my self-image to be a doctor and see patients. When I retired, I started to practice medicine in a way I liked, by volunteering at the Free Clinic in Arlington, Virginia. In the clinic, I can work at a pace that I set, and the patients, who are without health coverage, are grateful. I think what my colleagues and I do at the clinic is very successful in helping our patients manage their health problems and in keeping them out of the hospital emergency room. We spend the time we think is necessary and give people the care they need. This is what primary care used to be, and it's what it ought to be again.

But that won't happen if we expect all doctors to join free clinics and work without pay. To repair the damage to the profession that has occurred, the federal government needs to take steps to make sure that doctors are properly paid. Medicare, which sets the course for many private insurers, could lead the way. Since 1992, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have been setting fees for reimbursement based on advice from an entity called the Relative Value Update Committee, or RUC. This committee, composed of twenty-nine members, twenty-three of whom are appointed by various specialist medical societies, operates under the auspices of the American Medical Association. The problem with the RUC is that most of its members are specialists, and the result is that the reimbursement levels it recommends are clearly weighted in favor of surgical or procedure-oriented specialties.

Instead of relying on the RUC, Medicare administrators should consider taking a fresh look at the decline in the number of primary care physicians and come up with some conclusions of their own about proper reimbursement fees. The cognitive services rendered by primary care doctors are perhaps the most valuable medical commodity on the market, and they merit higher fees than, say, the removal of a skin lesion. Medicare won't make such changes without backing from Congress and the White House. Lobbying by medical professionals who appreciate the current status quo will be fierce, and Congress must be prepared to resist it. There are other ways to increase the number of primary care physicians, certainly, but we need agreement on the ends before we can come up with proper suggestions for the means.

Once reforms are in place, primary care doctors will have to meet new obligations too. They'll need to make their offices more efficient, to handle what are sure to be increased demands as health care becomes more complex. But no matter how many improvements in efficiency they might manage to introduce on their own, time is a fixed commodity. Spending fifteen minutes one on one with a patient either happens or it doesn't; no innovation can allow doctors to spend fifteen minutes one on one with five patients an hour.

There's still time to do something about this problem, but we can't keep letting it get worse. Otherwise, by the time Washington works up the political will to implement a sensible health system with primary care at its core, it will be a solution with no doctors left to make it work. WM

N. Thomas Connally, MD, MACP, practiced internal medicine in Washington, D.C., for thirty-three years. He is currently the volunteer medical director of the Arlington Free Clinic.

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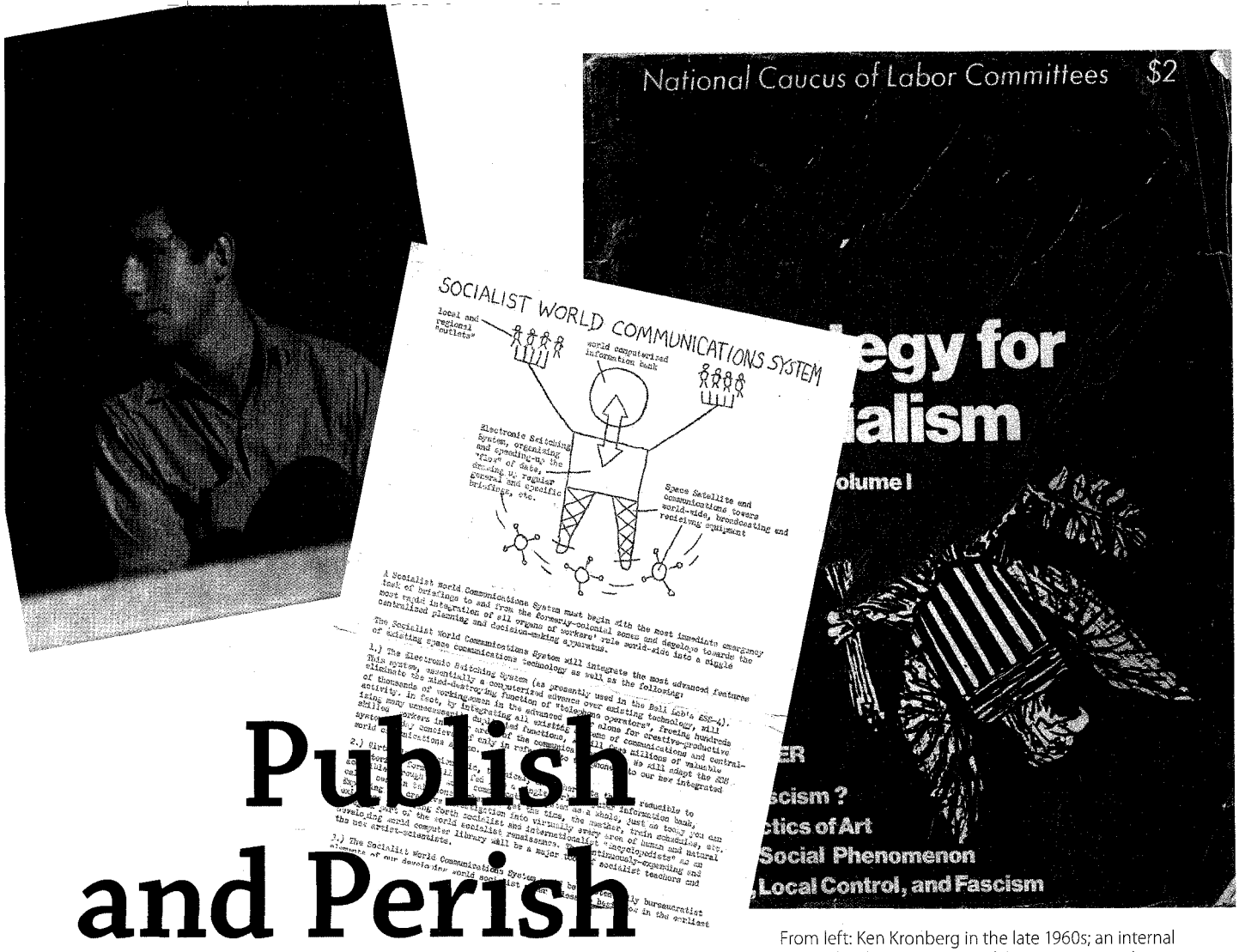

From left: Ken Kronberg in the late 1960s; an internal LaRouche document; one of the many LaRouche publications

Publish and Perish

The mysterious death of Lyndon LaRouche's printer

By Avi Klein

For forty years, the Lyndon LaRouche movement has been a ubiquitous, if diminishing, presence in the political landscape of America, and of Washington. LaRouche has made eight runs for the presidency, including one campaign from prison. At D.C. press conferences and think tank events, a reporter for a LaRouche publication called *Executive Intelligence Review* can often be heard asking strange questions about the grain cartel. Young, malnourished LaRouche acolytes frequently stop Hill staffers on their way home from work and hand them pamphlets with titillating titles like "Children of Satan" or "The Gore of Babylon." A peek inside offers details on LaRouche's many enemies, such as the "Conrad Black–backed McCain–Lieberman–Donna Brazile cabal."

One of the LaRouche movement's longest-serving loyalists was Ken Kronberg. A handsome classics scholar and drama teacher, Kronberg owned and managed PMR Printing, the outfit that has generated the idiosyncratic propaganda that sustains LaRouche's entire enterprise. Last year, the LaRouche organization spent more than $2.5 million—at least 60 percent of its publicly reported expenditures—on printing and distributing pamphlets. Most of this money went to PMR. LaRouche's output was so prolific, in fact, that PMR ranked among the country's top 400 printers by sales. Despite this, the company's finances were in perilous shape. Various LaRouche organizations owed Kronberg hundreds of thousands of dollars. When the IRS and Virginia tax authorities came calling over withholding payments, Ken knew he was in serious trouble.

On April 11, 2007, Ken sat in PMR's offices in Sterling, Virginia, forty-five miles northwest of Washington, to read the "morning briefing," a daily compendium of political statements that reflect the outcome of the executive committee meetings held at LaRouche's house in the nearby town of Round Hill. This particular briefing struck unnervingly close to home. Written by a close associate of LaRouche's and addressed to the movement's younger followers, the brief bitterly attacked what it called the "baby boomers" in the organization—members like Kronberg who had joined

Courtesy of the author

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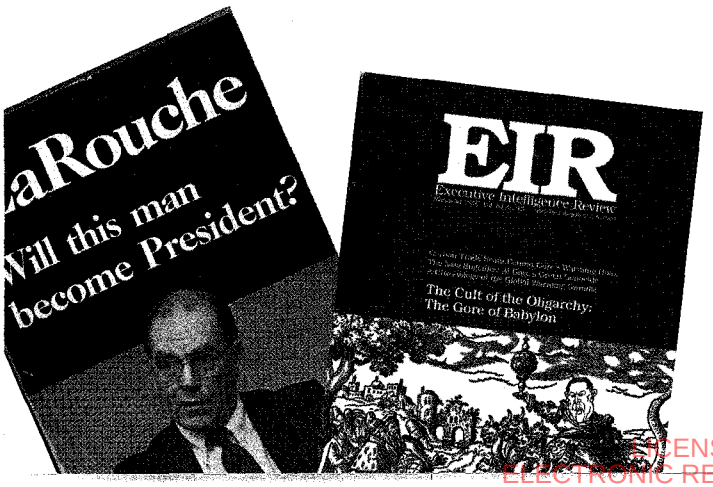
LaRouche in the late 1960s and early '70s. The brief named "the print shop"—Kronberg's operation—as a special target. "The Boomers will be scared into becoming human, because you're in the real world, and they're not," the brief read. "Unless," the writer added, the boomers "want to commit suicide."

This note may have had an effect. At 10:17 a.m., Kronberg sent an e-mail to his accountant instructing him to transfer $235,000 held in an escrow account to the IRS. He got in his blue-green Toyota Corolla and drove east. He mailed some family bills at the post office, then turned around onto the Waxpool Road overpass. Just before 10:30 a.m., Kronberg parked his car on the side of the overpass, turned on his emergency lights, and flung himself over the railing to his death. (Although LaRouche's home is only thirty-five miles from the St. James Episcopal Church in Warrentown, Virginia, where Kronberg's funeral was held, LaRouche didn't show up for the service.)

True to form, LaRouche's current and former followers immediately burst forth with conspiracy theories. Had Kronberg been deliberately goaded to commit suicide by the movement's leaders? Had this private and modest man killed himself in a public fashion in order to draw attention to LaRouche's murky finances? Much of this speculation took place on FactNet, an Internet discussion board for former cult members. Users soon posted leaked internal memoranda from the LaRouche leadership showing that it, too, was blindsided and uncertain.

Whatever the answers to these questions, Kronberg's life and death perhaps tell an even more interesting tale. From the very beginning, the LaRouche movement has been a thoroughly paper-based cult. Its strange propaganda, disposable to most people who encounter it, has been central to both the movement's proselytizing activities and its finances. Although most of PMR's problems stemmed from LaRouche's own impecuniousness and his insatiable demand for printed materials, Kronberg's financial and legal troubles infuriated LaRouche. LaRouche was furious because he was frightened. Ink is the lifeblood of the LaRouche organization, and in PMR's impending demise, he could see the likely death of the organization itself.

The LaRouche movement has been called many things: Marxist, fascist, a political cult, a personality cult, a criminal enterprise, and, in the words of the Heritage Foundation, "one of the strangest political groups in American history." More than anything else, however, what it resembles is a vast and bizarre vanity press.



Lyndon Hermyle LaRouche was born in 1922 and raised in rural New Hampshire and in Massachusetts. Bullied at school, but forbidden by his Quaker parents to fight back, he turned to philosophy as his weapon, dismissing his schoolyard persecutors as the "unwitting followers of David Hume." His father, a shoe executive who edited a right-wing newspaper and carried on two simultaneous feuds with rival Quaker groups, was a dominating influence during his childhood.

LaRouche served a brief stint as a noncombatant in World War II, and claimed to have worked as a medic in the China-Burma-India theater. By one account, he distinguished himself as a polyglot capable of playing multiple games of chess at once. Exposed to Marxism while overseas, he joined up with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Boston upon his return. Like socialist movements of every era, the SWP put a high premium on agitprop pamphlets, newspapers, and denunciatory internal memoranda. LaRouche had found his medium.

Staying up sometimes for forty hours straight, discarded drafts piling up around his typewriter, LaRouche cultivated the multidisciplinary stream-of-consciousness style that would distinguish his output for years to come, writing under the nom de plume Lyn Marcus. For instance, here is LaRouche expounding on the nature of the Marxist dialectic in a 1969 essay, "The Philosophy of Socialist Education (From an Advanced Standpoint)":

> *In sum, on this particular point, pre-conscious or dialectical processes of mentation may be contrasted with formal logic, etc., as a "domain" of process conceptions of whole processes in which the particularity, including the particular conception introduced to consciousness, is a determined feature of a* determining *holistic process.*

What really distinguished LaRouche's writings from those of other abstruse revolutionary theorists was the all-encompassing quality of his erudition. A discourse on local Marxist politics might veer into a discussion of the proper pitch to be used in bel canto singing, before touching on Plato and Aristotle, the German philosopher Friedrich Schiller, and concluding with a riff on the grain trade.

Despite LaRouche's productivity, it was not a happy time for him. He was awkward in social settings, and his only political activities outside his writing were, he later recalled, "limited to occasional meetings and instructions to my (former) wife to attend to dues and pledge payments." Moreover, very little of his writing was deemed to be suitable for publication. (One SWP member characterized LaRouche's oeuvre as "thick, dull, [and] endless.") LaRouche resolved to start over, deciding that "no revolutionary movement was going to be brought into being in the USA unless I brought it into being."

In 1967, LaRouche began holding training seminars for "revolutionary leadership cadres" at New York's Free School. Sometimes sporting a wild beard and a floppy bow tie, and

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always glaring out from behind Woody Allen glasses, the forty-five-year-old LaRouche mesmerized his much younger students with what appeared to be a deep understanding of how the world really worked. During the 1960s and early '70s, followers flocked to his side. Unlike the young members who distribute LaRouche literature today, these recruits were not what we tend to think of as cult material. Intelligent and idealistic, they were educated in the classics, mathematics, and psychology. Most were seeking an intellectual Marxism without the free love and druggie ethos that dominated other left-wing groups of the time. When LaRouche explained that classical literature and science experiments alone could save the world, many were hooked.

Ken Kronberg belonged to this first wave of converts. He grew up in New York in a Jewish immigrant family. In 1970, after graduating from St. John's College in New Mexico with a philosophy degree, he returned to New York, hoping to join a Marxist group. Kronberg soon found work at the publisher John Wylie & Sons, editing science books. But when he picked up a LaRouche newspaper at a friend's house, his literary and political ambitions were subsumed. "He was sold on the guy from the beginning," a friend of his from college told me.

It was a perfect fit for Kronberg, because production of political literature was driving the growth of LaRouche's movement, now formally known as the National Caucus of Labor Committees. Street teams holding signs with arresting slogans—for example, "Feed Jane Fonda to the Whales"—would hand pamphlets to passersby, followed by invitations to a lesson or meeting. LaRouche believed fervently in the mystical power of the written word, reasoning that if he distributed his ideas widely enough, they would permeate the public consciousness even if his movement's membership remained small. To that end, he urged his followers to publish lengthy discourses of their own. "Success in organizing the working class," explained one memo from the time, requires "the intellectual self-development of cadres through the sort of writing we are now demanding for *The Campaigner* and *New Solidarity*." LaRouche was not the first cult leader to use the technique of saturating potential converts with his message, but he was adept at making founding members feel important, both by exaggerating the intellectual significance of their work and by rewarding loyalists with authority.

Kronberg quickly proved himself a skilled and popular editor and typesetter for the group's twice-weekly political newspaper, *New Solidarity*. Two years later, he was named to the organization's national committee—making him a rising star in a core of approximately twenty-five organizers supposedly responsible for policy and operations. In truth, LaRouche made all the decisions.

Some of those decisions tested Kronberg's loyalty, but he passed the trials with distinction. In 1971, Kronberg had met Molly Hackett, an energetic and sharp-tongued twenty-three-year-old. In 1973, Hackett joined the movement so that she could marry Kronberg; soon afterward, she became pregnant. However, LaRouche had impressed upon his followers that the fate of humanity lay in their hands; families were a dangerous distraction. Responding to that sentiment, Kronberg persuaded her to have an abortion. (The couple later had a son, Max, in defiance of LaRouche.)

Events took an even darker turn in 1972, when LaRouche became convinced that Chris White, his ex-wife's new boyfriend, had been brainwashed by the British to assassinate LaRouche. He undertook a two-week "deprogramming" of White, a process that started in Kronberg's apartment on West Seventy-third Street. According to a tape recording later obtained by the *New York Times*, these sessions were marked by "sounds of weeping and vomiting." At one point, according to the *Times*, a voice could be heard saying, "Raise the voltage."

The so-called Chris White Affair horrified Kronberg, according to several of his friends from that era. So did a technique known as "ego-stripping" that LaRouche began to practice on senior cadres. (In one such session, a former member told me, a disgusted Kronberg threw a soda bottle across the room and stormed out.) Still, convinced that LaRouche was a genius destined for the White House, and gratified to play an integral part in his rise, Kronberg rationalized his leader's seemingly crackpot ideas. Ken "would construct reasonable and coherent backgrounds for the ludicrous statements being given," said a family member. "What's the motive, what's the plan behind this, he doesn't believe this, he's using it to get something."

What LaRouche wanted was to become president of the United States. In 1976, he ran on his own U.S. Labor Party platform, winning 40,000 votes, or .05 percent of the national total. By 1980, the LaRouche organization had swerved dramatically to the right, working closely with such groups as Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby and promoting conservative causes like the strategic defense initiative. Predicting that Ronald Reagan would win the election, and eager to gain his favor, LaRouche joined the Democratic Party in order to launch more effective attacks on Reagan's Democratic opponents. LaRouche would run on the Democratic ticket for his next seven campaigns.

During the 1980s, LaRouche reached the apex of his influence. The organization had a steady income stream from its aggressive telephone fund-raising teams and remarkable political contacts in Washington. Within the Beltway, it sold itself as a private intelligence agency, and many people fell for its pitch, including senior staffers on Reagan's National Security Council such as Richard Morris, a top aide to National Security Adviser William Clarke. Throughout Reagan's first term, LaRouche acolytes were invited to provide NSC staffers with frequent briefings. During this time LaRouche also purchased large blocks of television airtime, which he used to expand on his views about national politics (such as his conviction that Walter Mondale was a Soviet agent). In 1986, the group possessed sufficient organizational ability to win the Democratic primaries in Illinois for lieutenant governor

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and secretary of state, although both of its candidates were handily defeated in the general election.

LaRouche's increased visibility came with a price. By vaulting himself onto the national stage, he was attempting to convert a small-time, somewhat manageable propaganda production outfit into a national political machine that required substantial infusions of money. As always, LaRouche looked toward the printing operation to underwrite his aspirations.

By this point, the group had already established a number of publications, including a newspaper, a wire service, an arts magazine, a news magazine, numerous science magazines, and a theoretical journal. (As a general rule, the less each publication contained of LaRouche's writing, the better it sold.) The movement also traded on LaRouche's supposed cachet in the intelligence world to peddle "special reports" that could be bought for up to $250 per copy. These were typically popular only in Third World embassies, where officials—under the impression that LaRouche was still a Marxist—were convinced that he possessed secret knowledge about international politics. By 1980, the group was clearing almost $200,000 a week from campaign contributions and donations to various LaRouche-connected nonprofits and magazine subscriptions, all of which were treated as belonging to a single account. (This marked the beginning of the group's problems with the FEC, which penalized the organization after discovering that it had illegally reported numerous magazine subscriptions as political contributions in order to qualify for more matching funds.)

Convinced that the British had brainwashed his ex-wife's boyfriend to assassinate him, LaRouche ordered the boyfriend to be put through "deprogramming" sessions. On a tape of the sessions, a voice can be heard saying, "Raise the voltage."

It is nearly impossible to make sense of the LaRouche movement's convoluted finances. However, one fact is clear: although the print shop generated crucial short-term cash flow from subscriptions and report sales, this income never came close to covering the group's payroll, rent, and advertising costs. The organization also had sizable legal expenses, because it was constantly on the run from its creditors. Partly this was due to its refusal to abide by established accounting techniques. Mostly, though, the problem was that some of the leading cadres seemed to believe they didn't have to pay bills, because they were performing heroic revolutionary deeds. Lawsuits from landlords, vendors, and former employees clogged the New York City docket. By the early 1980s, the committee had outstanding accounts with most of the large printing shops in New York.

In response, LaRouche encouraged members to set up private editorial and printing companies. The idea was that in-house printers could produce the publications that the organization used to raise money at a far lower cost than private vendors. With financial help from his wife's family, Kronberg created World Composition Services (WorldComp), a typesetting company that he operated out of LaRouche's offices. At the time, WorldComp was a cutting-edge venture, the first company of its kind to use computer typesetting in New York. Kronberg came to control PMR as well, which printed most of the group's pamphlets, books, and newspapers. (Because LaRouche's idea of "low-cost printing" often meant, in reality, "free printing," the two companies took on other regular clients, including the United Nations and the Ford Foundation.)

Kronberg's foray into capitalism wasn't unique. "Unlike the average flower-selling Moonie, many of LaRouche's devotees had advanced degrees and highly marketable skills," writes Dennis King, author of *Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism*. Yet these enterprises seldom ran smoothly. Cadres found it impossible to resist LaRouche's constant demands for cash and services performed on credit. In one case, bankruptcy proceedings revealed that Computron, a well-respected software company owned and managed by high-ranking cadres, was spending $5,000 to $10,000 a week to cover 20 percent of the organization's budget. LaRouche poured most of this money into his 1980 presidential campaign. In New Hampshire, for instance, he spent $1 million to paper the state with pamphlets, which he believed would allow him to capture 15 percent of the Democratic primary vote. He received a mere 2 percent.

Hoping to achieve a better result in subsequent elections, LaRouche became more grandiose in his operations, and the fund-raising methods employed by his printing shop became correspondingly more dubious. In one favored approach, his representatives would contact a donor known to be a soft touch with an offer to invest in a large project, such as delivering copies of LaRouche's latest report on the strategic defense initiative to every congressional office. The potential donor would be quoted a price in the tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, reflecting the supposed market price of the report, even though the information it contained was generally worthless, not to mention unreadable.

Molly Kronberg was often involved with deceptions practiced by members of the organization. In 1978, she had helped to open the New Benjamin Franklin Publishing House in order to serve as the publisher of *Dope Inc.*, a massive project that famously named the Queen of England as the head of the international drug trade. It was first serialized in *Executive Intelligence Review* and later published as a book. Under pressure to pay PMR for printing

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the books, Molly took out modest loans. They weren't enough. She began traveling around the country and pressuring LaRouche supporters to sign promissory notes to the movement on wildly generous terms. She was eventually arrested for her role in another creative hoax, in which a Wall Street economist loaned the company more than $75,000 to republish what he thought would be the works of various nineteenth-century economists he admired. However, as Dennis King reports, "the only books that were published were by or about LaRouche."

In 1989, Molly was put on trial in New York state court with a number of other cadres. She tried to prevent LaRouche from testifying in her defense, believing that he would not make a good impression on the jury. To LaRouche, this was a grave betrayal. Eager for any public platform he could get, he insisted on speaking on her behalf. Molly was eventually sentenced to five years of probation for defrauding lenders.

LaRouche himself was in prison by then, having been convicted in 1988 for mail and tax crimes by a Virginia federal court and sentenced to fifteen years. PMR was a direct beneficiary of these schemes, but because Kronberg had never been involved in soliciting loans and did not play an active role in the group's finances, he managed to escape indictment.

By the 1990s, most LaRouche members had relocated from New York to Leesburg, Virginia, a bucolic town forty-five minutes northwest of D.C. known for its antique shops and horse farms. LaRouche had moved to the area in the mid-1980s, wanting to be closer to Washington. (Former associates explained that he also wanted plenty of land on which to hide from would-be assassins.) He settled on a 171-acre estate called Ibykus Farms, where he was waited on by cadres; an internal budget from 1995 shows that he ran a weekly tab of $4,500 for security guards. He and his followers, however, didn't really fit into their new locale. Leesburg's citizens rebelled when the group deployed its aggressive organizing techniques on the town's picturesque streets. Later, the local small business association almost shut down after LaRouche cadres flooded its membership rolls and usurped its agenda. LaRouche added the townspeople to his list of enemies, describing Leesburg's garden club as a "nest" of Soviet agents.

For many members, the period of LaRouche's imprisonment in the early 1990s offered a rare time of sanity. Some followers drifted away; others stayed and tried to clean up the organization's finances. The first thing they turned to was PMR, which was in deep trouble. LaRouche owed it money for numerous printing orders, and in 1992 he ran for president from jail, burdening the company with yet more unpaid bills. In desperation, Kronberg had started to skim FICA payments, and the IRS had noticed. Anxious that the print shop not go under, the organization borrowed heavily against Ibykus Farms. (It lost the property the next year after failing to make payments on the loan.) The millions of dollars these loans brought in covered PMR's debts and "saved the organization," recalls a former member of the finance office. It saved Kronberg too, at least temporarily.

When LaRouche emerged from jail in 1994, he perceived that his influence among his founding followers was waning. For one thing, his activist power had declined, as his aging members no longer wanted to do menial organizing work. The organization's finances were deteriorating as a result of his notoriety and parole conditions, which stipulated that ethical lapses in any LaRouche entity would cause his parole to be revoked.

To LaRouche, however, the group's gravest problem was that it no longer distributed his literature very effectively. In 1999, when the conditions on his parole were lifted, he devised a bold plan: a new youth movement that would fan out to major cities and college campuses around the country, pushing LaRouche publications and reestablishing him as a major player on the national scene.

The remaining senior members enthusiastically supported the initiative. This was a big mistake. Experts who

study political cults have observed that such groups thrive on an imagined enemy in opposition to which the group constructs it own collective identity. LaRouche had always encouraged members to believe they were the victims of mass conspiracies (usually perpetrated, according to LaRouche, by John Train, a New York investment advisor and cofounder of the *Paris Review*). While LaRouche maintained his belief in these plots, he concocted a sinister new nemesis: the baby boomer.

This perceived enemy was a very useful device to LaRouche as he formed his new group, the LaRouche Youth Movement. This group attracted very different people from those who had joined the movement with Kronberg. The later recruits were mostly college dropouts, many of them mentally unstable, whom LaRouche pressured to leave school and live in organization group homes. In order to seal their allegiance, LaRouche latched on to the boomers as a perfect indoctrination device, a way to channel the rage new acolytes felt

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toward their parents at a nearby, internal enemy: the founding generation of his own followers.

Things quickly took a nasty turn. Death, LaRouche warned repeatedly, was the best choice for the boomers, whom he called a "mass of maddened lemmings" and a "leaf of poison ivy." In a speech in Los Angeles, he directed the Youth Movement to take a hard line with the organization's older members. "They will stubbornly, angrily, furiously, cling to their mores. And you simply have to push, as I do. Ride roughshod," he said. "Because, they'll do everything they can to sabotage you, by using peer group pressures among themselves. They'll conspire—they actually will form little conspiracies, and they'll go behind your back."

As his finances became more precarious, LaRouche grew obsessed with the adversary he had created. He became convinced that the older members who ran his printing operation were engaged in a conspiracy to destroy him. In speech after speech, in internal memos and published literature, he accused the boomers of "sabotage" and "censorship" when fund-raisers failed to bring in enough money to pay for printing costs. He also believed that Kronberg was the head of a cabal that had plotted to have *Executive Intelligence Review*'s second-class mailing privileges revoked—a development that pushed the magazine's distribution costs even higher at a time when fund-raising was lagging.

What was really killing LaRouche's enterprise (in addition, of course, to its peculiar philosophies and inability to keep a simple balance sheet) was that its leader was clinging to a dying medium. Enamored by print, he had failed to exploit the Internet. The Web could have solved many of his problems. Compared to printed material, online propaganda is virtually free to produce, and the Internet offers limitless space for disquisitions on esoteric subjects. (If anyone was made for blogging, it was surely Lyndon LaRouche.)

But LaRouche's politics had always focused on physical infrastructure—in recent years, for instance, he had championed massive maglev construction and giant waterworks projects. The rise of the information and services industry held little interest for him, and so, having failed to predict the Internet, he proceeded to ignore it. Moreover, Computron and other similar fiascos had forced out the talent that made the group an early adopter of technology in the late 1970s. Although the group's fund-raising had improved in the '80s, it had failed to attract new classes of committed, educated senior cadres. This generational gap left the organization painfully unaware of the Internet's value as an organizing tool.

When the group's older leaders eventually ventured online, they often stumbled. They were slow to grasp that although the Internet allowed the free dissemination of ideas, it also made criticism equally accessible. Around 2003, the organization set up a discussion board and then a Yahoo group, but both were discovered by a former member who delighted in asking inconvenient questions about Jeremiah Duggan, a young Briton who died in 2003 under mysterious circumstances at a LaRouche conference in Germany. Organization members shut the boards down and tried a more proactive approach, popping up on anti-LaRouche sites to defend the organization. That tactic only inspired more criticism, and confirmed to posters that the LaRouche organization was worried about what they were saying. Eventually, Youth Movement members were ordered to stay off social networking sites like MySpace, which LaRouche deemed an "Orwellian brain-washing operation."

Instead, the organization persisted in its print habit. This dependence weighed heavily on Ken Kronberg, because PMR was once again in trouble. For at least five years, Kronberg had been billing the committee at or below cost, and to cover the shortfall he was forced to cut back salaries for national committee members on the payroll, including his own. Molly went back to work as an editor in the private sector to help make ends meet. By this time, however, the IRS was asking questions, and PMR and WorldComp were facing tax liens totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. The LaRouche organization tried to keep PMR going by feeding money into an escrow fund dedicated to PMR's tax bill, but it was an inadequate solution. Some of the donated money was transferred from LaRouche's political action committee (LPAC) to PMR under the guise of advance payment for printing—a serious FEC violation.

Two weeks before Kronberg's death, LPAC informed him that they were cutting him off. Seeing little point in paying bills to a company poised on the brink of insolvency, LPAC also demanded the return of a recent $100,000 advance, which PMR had already spent. Kronberg worried that the organization would try to raid the escrow account, which then held $235,000 earmarked for the IRS.

As long as Ken controlled the printing operation, he believed that he played too important a role in the movement for LaRouche to risk launching personal attacks against his family. As it became clear that PMR was about to fold, Ken realized that he was no longer protected. Four days before he died, he told Molly that he was going to have to shut down the companies. "I will be vilified. You and I will be vilified like nothing you've seen yet. It will be ugly; it will be brutal," he told her. "This is going to be the worst week of my life." The morning briefing confirmed that Ken and his family were now vulnerable to the relentless psychological abuse LaRouche directed at members who had displeased him. When Ken committed suicide, he didn't leave a note, but Molly and other members are convinced that his death was an attempt to draw attention to the organization's troubled finances, and as such was the bravest political act of his life.

Ken Kronberg's death threw the LaRouche movement into chaos. Molly was still on the national committee, and at first senior members reached out to her. But her colleagues soon started to suspect that she was leaking internal information on the Internet, and one morning she woke up to find that her organization e-mail accounts had been blocked. LaRouche drafted an attack on her, saying that donations of $1,025 she had made to Republican causes

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in 2004 and 2005 foreshadowed her treachery to the movement. Defying LaRouche, other members delayed publication of his screed for a day. LaRouche was forced to acknowledge that internal unhappiness was widespread: "It is not [the members'] fault," he said, "if some things for which they have worked so hard, and sacrificed so much, did not produce the results they had the right to achieve."

For LaRouche, this admission was startlingly candid. In the almost forty years since its inception, despite spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a week in operations and annually printing millions of books and magazines, the LaRouche operation has had no significant effect on American politics. It is remarkable in its impotence.

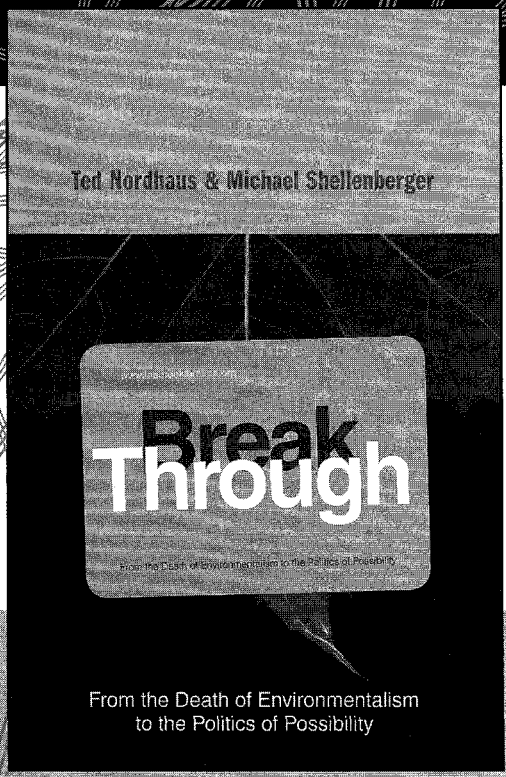
Despite the unrelenting loyalty of his followers, LaRouche has never come remotely close to being elected president. In fact, no LaRouche cadre has been elected to office at any level higher than school board. Nor have his economic theories attained any kind of recognition. The LaRouche-Riemann Method, an economic model that LaRouche calls "the most accurate method of economic forecasting in existence," has gone unnoticed by the social science indexes. Many former members admit to not understanding it.

In one perverse way, of course, the movement *did* work. For thirty years, Ken Kronberg printed, and all the other members edited and distributed, everything that LaRouche wrote, whether anybody understood it or not. If, in the late hours of the night, LaRouche determined that 50,000 copies of his latest essay on the Treaty of Westphalia needed to be distributed around the country, his followers did their best to oblige. That model, however, couldn't be sustained forever.

Two weeks after Ken died, PMR finally ran out of ink and paper. The IRS took action to collect LaRouche's 2004 campaign debts to the company. Fund-raisers were ordered not to sell any more subscriptions to LaRouche publications, while current subscribers have been directed to unappealing electronic versions. With no ability to get credit and with its publications shuttered, the group now copies one-pagers at Kinko's. Most humiliating of all, it has been forced to operate on the Internet. On its Web site, LPAC now urges readers to print out and distribute its fliers themselves.

Meanwhile, membership at the Washington, D.C., branch of the LaRouche Youth Movement is said to be disintegrating, and its pamphleteers are seen far less frequently than in previous months. The 2008 election will be the first in thirty-two years in which LaRouche has not sought the presidency. Recently, a senior member published an article that dared to speculate on a topic that once would have been unthinkable: a post-LaRouche world. "What was so upsetting," said one longtime member and friend of Kronberg's who is no longer with the group, "was to realize how pointless it all was. How we had no effect at all." WM

Avi Klein is a writer living in Washington, D.C. He can be reached at avi.klein@mac.com.



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Rudy Awakening

As president, Giuliani would grab even more executive power than Bush and Cheney. His mayoralty tells the story.

By Rachel Morris

If you drove though the Lincoln Tunnel into Manhattan in 1993, your first encounter with New Yorkers was likely to be with an army of men with squeegees who waded through the idling cars, wiping each windshield with a grimy cloth. (You knew to pay your attendant, because he might break your wipers otherwise.) On sidewalks, you'd be flanked by piles of garbage bags because the government was $2.3 billion in debt and couldn't afford to pick them up. On street corners of the Lower East Side, drug dealers furtively whispered code words for the sale of the day—"Express," "C-Town," "Bodybag." The local tabloids regularly carried news of race riots and gruesome crimes; more than 2,000 people were murdered each year. *Esquire* called the city "the worst place on earth," and 45 percent of New Yorkers said they would get out of town the next day if they could. During the mayoral election of 1993, expectations for city officials had fallen so low that *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker wrote, "My long experience of mayors leaves no doubt there are only two things city dwellers can reasonably expect of a mayor: one, collect the garbage; two, keep the streets paved."

That year New York elected a mayor who was determined to do more. Rudy Giuliani, a dynamic former prosecutor, had been the youngest man to hold the number three position at the Justice Department, impressing his future employers with his talk of "vigor, vigor, vigor." Now, this spirit would be transferred to his hometown. Giuliani worked tirelessly. He immersed himself in policy briefings. He bargained hard with unions, cut spending and welfare, and laid off thousands of city workers in a town where one in five residents was on the city payroll. In concert with his police commissioner, William Bratton, he helped introduce innovative, aggressive methods of policing. He cracked down on the squeegee men and the drug dealers—as well as panhandlers, prostitutes, peep shows, turnstile jumpers, truants, three-card monte dealers, the mafia, the homeless, and people who rode their bicycles on the sidewalks.

The city began to change. It looked cleaner and felt safer, and the crime rate plunged. In his famous article "The Tipping Point," published in the *New Yorker* in the summer of 1996, Malcolm Gladwell noted that New York's violent crime rate now ranked 136th among major American cities—"on a par with Boise, Idaho." That year, murders in the city fell to 984, the lowest total since 1968. The budget crisis receded, at least for the time being. In the fall of 1996, the Yankees won

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the World Series after an eighteen-year slump, and Giuliani triumphantly proclaimed the victory "a metaphor for a city that is undergoing a great renaissance." Liberal New Yorkers, who had shunned Giuliani in 1993, started to reconsider his appeal, and in 1997 he won reelection in a landslide.

Giuliani's second term, however, would be rocky, as the personality flaws that people had sensed in his first term came to engulf New York City politics. Somehow, crackdowns on drug dealers bled into irrational vendettas against hot dog vendors and jaywalkers. The mayor ensnared City Hall in a number of ill-advised lawsuits (such as the time he was successfully sued by the Brooklyn Museum after trying to evict it for displaying a painting of the Virgin Mary smeared with elephant dung). And when New York police officers were implicated in horrifying cases of abuse, Giuliani's reflexive, belligerent defense of the NYPD antagonized minority groups and affronted many New Yorkers. By the time Giuliani left office, New Yorkers had wearied of his abrasive, vindictive behavior. At the same time, they were grateful to him for having cleaned up their city.

Today, Giuliani is a front-runner for the presidency of the United States. Since 9/11 the office he seeks has been radically remade. Led by Dick Cheney, the Bush administration has expanded White House powers to levels unseen since the Nixon years. Claiming an inherent authority to act outside the law, it has unilaterally set aside treaties, intercepted telephone calls between citizens without court warrants, detained individuals indefinitely without judicial review, ordered "enhanced interrogations," or torture, prohibited by law, and claimed the ability to disregard more than 1,000 parts of legislation that it has deemed to improperly restrict its authority. To thwart oversight and checks on its power, all spheres of executive branch operations have been fortified by heightened secrecy.

Embedded in Giuliani's operating style is a belief that rules don't apply to him.

This expansion has warped policy decisions, undermined the country's authority abroad, and damaged the framework of laws, institutions, and processes that secure citizens against abuse by the state. It also prompts two of the most crucial, if as yet unasked, questions of the 2008 presidential race: Which contenders are most likely to relinquish some of these powers, or, at the very least, decline to fully use them? And, alternatively, which candidate is most likely to not only embrace the powers that Bush has claimed, but to seize more? The reply to the first question is complicated, but to the second it's simple: Rudy Giuliani.

Many Giuliani watchers already understand that Rudy is a hothead and a grandstander, even a bit of a dictator at times. These qualities have dominated the story of his mayoralty that most people know. As that drama was unfolding, however, so was a quieter story, driven by Giuliani's instinct and capacity for manipulating the levers of government. His methods, like those of the current White House, included appointments of yes-men, aggressive tests of legal limits, strategic lawbreaking, resistance to oversight, and obsessive secrecy. As was also the case with the White House, the events of 9/11 solidified the mindset underlying his worst tendencies. Embedded in his operating style is a belief that rules don't apply to him, and a ruthless gift for exploiting the intrinsic weaknesses in the system of checks and balances. That's why, of all the presidential candidates, Giuliani is most likely to take the expansions of the executive branch made by the Bush administration and push them further still. The blueprint can be found in the often-overlooked corners of his mayoralty.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: BRINGING ON THE YES-MEN

Rudolph W. Giuliani was inaugurated on the steps of City Hall on January 2, 1994. As he pledged to end the fear that had infected the city, his seven-year-old son scampered around the dais, mouthing passages in unison with his father. The public advocate, Mark Green, was sworn in next, and delivered a typically florid address. "We need to hear more from the symphony of New York," Green intoned, "a glorious city in which each of us may rehearse and practice our parts alone, but the music is sweetest only when we come and play together into a more harmonic whole." Soon afterward, Green got a call from Giuliani's childhood friend Peter Powers, who had just started work as a deputy mayor. "The mayor didn't like your speech," Powers informed Green. "He thought it was too mayoral." That was Green's introduction to the Yesrudys.

In his prosecutor days, Giuliani had insulated himself within a circle of close male associates. They were smart and dedicated and accompanied him with a certain swagger, and they could always be depended on not to outshine their boss. Others in the office derisively referred to them as the "Yesrudys" (according to the journalist James Stewart, the term was correctly pronounced with a southern slave accent). When Giuilani arrived at City Hall, he brought some of the original Yesrudys with him, including Randy Mastro (his chief of staff), Denny Young (his counsel), and Randy Levine (his labor commissioner). These men were competent, but they also owed their careers in public life to Giuliani and enforced his will unstintingly.

From the first days of his term, Giuliani demanded a centralized operation that had no room for dissenters. He entrusted Tony Carbonetti, a former manager of a Boston bar in his twenties, with the task of installing loyalists not just in top positions but throughout the layers of the municipal government. The new recruits were quickly reminded that fidelity to Giuliani was their most important qualification; everyone knew the price of displeasing the mayor. "When

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Rudy read *The Godfather*," a former deputy mayor remarked approvingly to one of Giuliani's biographers, "he studied it from the point of view of how to communicate effectively down to the lowest ranks of an organization, so that every foot soldier understood his marching orders."

Giuliani's determination to whip the municipal government into shape wasn't all bad. For years, New York City's prosperity had been held hostage to its feckless bureaucracy, and one of the reasons Giuliani was able to turn the city around was that he brought the government under his control. As with so much else, however, Giuliani didn't know when to stop. Most commissioners had to submit their speeches for vetting by Giuliani's aides. Giuliani boasted that he personally approved precinct-level detective promotions. A senior aide told James Traub of the *Times* that when Giuliani's communications director interviewed applicants, even for low-level jobs, she inquired whether they would "take a bullet for the mayor."

Before long, his tough management style deteriorated into futile callousness. "People in his administration were terrified of him," said former Mayor Ed Koch. Giuliani drove out even his best officials for being insufficiently deferential. Police Commissioner Bratton, the architect of New York's crime-fighting successes, was ousted in 1996. Rudy Crew, a well-regarded education chancellor, surrendered in 1999, stalling much-needed reform of New York's schools. Ultimately, the entire city government became an extension of Giuliani's outsize personality. This allowed him to wield his authority to maximum effect, but the lack of independent voices also made him particularly susceptible to overreach.

TESTING THE LIMITS OF THE LAW

Mayors of New York City have long enjoyed an unusual degree of power for an American government executive. They're able, for instance, to appoint judges and commissioners without any kind of legislative approval. In 1989, a revision of the city's charter (effectively the local constitution) granted even more power to the mayor, including greater influence over land use and contracts. Today, New York's mayor arguably has more power over the city than the governor does over New York State—or, for that matter, than the president does over the nation. Mitchell Moss, an esteemed historian of New York municipal politics, has said that the mayor "really is the king of New York."

But for Giuliani, the kingship wasn't enough. The city council was a persistent annoyance to him, and he began skirmishing with it almost immediately. He also resented the intrusion of the two other major checks on his power: the Independent Budget Office, an independent financial watchdog created in 1989 as a counterweight to the mayor's enhanced authority; and the Office of the Public Advocate, which acts as an ombudsman for the city's residents. Giuliani tried to reduce the public advocate's budget, and refused to fund the IBO until 1996.

Not long after his second term began, Giuliani sought to make more lasting changes. This time, he went straight for the city charter. Over the past forty years, only two commissions had been held to revise New York's governing document. During his time in office, Giuliani convened three. What's more, although the previous panels had been blue-chip affairs, Giuliani's commissions weren't very prestigious. The first, launched in 1998, was chaired by Giuliani's longtime friend Peter Powers. It was dominated by members who were undoubtedly experienced in government, but who happened to have acquired that experience by working for Rudy Giuliani. It was advised by attorneys from Giuliani's Law Department and usually met in secret. One of the first things it considered was a proposal dear to the mayor: abolishing the Independent Budget Office and the Office of the Public Advocate.

Veterans of city politics were alarmed. One was longtime New York lawyer Frederick Schwarz, who had chaired the most recent commission in 1989. (He had also served as the chief counsel on the 1975 Church Committee, established after Watergate to investigate abuses of intelligence.) Schwarz sent a public letter to Powers, characterizing the commission's lack of independence as an "exercise of untempered raw power." He implored the commission not to enhance the power of the mayoralty. "[A] principal criticism of our work was that we had left a City with a mayoralty that was *too* strong. I did not think that was correct," he wrote. "What is crystal clear to me is that you and your Commission should not, under any circumstances, recommend an *increase* in the powers of the mayoralty. Nor should you recommend the elimination of independent offices ... that, among other things, serve as a check on and balance to the enormous powers of the mayoralty and its huge bureaucracy."

In 1997, Giuliani booted New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall's auditors out of city agencies. McCall issued seventeen subpoenas in one month alone, all of which the mayor's office ignored.

In the face of public dismay, the commission dropped its plans to eliminate the IBO and the public advocate's office. Nevertheless, as Giuliani knew, the panel still served a very useful purpose. A quirk in New York state law says that if the mayor holds a commission, neither the city council nor the public can put a referendum on the ballot. That year, the commission allowed Giuliani to prevent a proposed council referendum about the location of Yankee Stadium (Giuliani

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wanted to move it to Manhattan, but a referendum would have allowed voters to prevent the use of city money for the proposal). "Giuliani's commissions were painted with the brush of respectability, but it was a subtle device to block anybody else from getting a referendum on the ballot," a former city council staffer explained.

Still, Giuliani wasn't deterred. The following year, he launched another commission. This time, the chairman was Randy Mastro, a former prosecutor pal, and eleven of the fifteen commissioners had once worked in Giuliani's administration or been appointed by him to a city board. Again, its mission was anything but high-minded. The first thing it considered was a revision that would ensure that if Giuliani were elected to the U.S. Senate in 2000, his habitual foil, Mark Green—who as public advocate would automatically replace him—would be eliminated from the mayoral succession. When public opinion again caused the commission to retreat (even the *New York Post* ridiculed the proposal as a "bill of attainder"), the commission instead proposed a list of fourteen changes that would tilt the balance of power in city government further in the mayor's favor. In the end, voters rejected the changes resoundingly. Unabashed, Giuliani launched his third commission in 2001. Ultimately, his attempts to change the charter failed, but by blocking ballot measures for three years, Giuliani had managed to make his quixotic commissions work to his advantage.

BREAKING THE LAW

In 1996, Doug Criscitello, a former federal budget analyst, started work as the first director of the Independent Budget Office. Criscitello expected to put his auditors to work immediately, but then he received a surprising communication from the mayor's office. It was a memorandum informing him that all the IBO's requests for data had to be referred to City Hall—despite plain language in the city charter stating that the IBO could get information directly from municipal agencies. Puzzled, Criscitello contacted Giuliani's lawyers, who reaffirmed the message. "They weren't nasty about it. They were very matter-of-fact," said Criscitello. "'Here's how we've decided to interpret the charter, and if you disagree there's a legal process you can go through and we can get a judge to rule on this.'" Eventually, the IBO sued the mayor's office for the data, and in 1998 a state judge ruled that City Hall had violated the city charter and ordered it to start cooperating. Meanwhile, Giuliani had bought two years of time.

Criscitello had run into what was becoming a signature feature of Giuliani's governing style. Chafing against the limits of his authority, Giuliani was taking an increasingly instrumentalist view of the law: it was only as good as how well it was enforced, and should be overstepped when doing so served his ends. His administration tussled in court not only with the IBO but also with numerous interest groups, the state comptroller, the public advocate, and the city council. "All of those were effectively cases that said, he's gone beyond the restraints on executive power," said Eric Lane, director of the 1989 charter commission and a law professor at Hofstra University. By 1999, the city council was forced to allocate money specifically for the purpose of suing City Hall, which had 685 lawyers on its payroll and had increased its legal budget by 41 percent since Giuliani took office.

When Giuliani wanted to do something and was advised by his staff that it was illegal, it was "hard for him," one of his former commissioners explained to me. "As a lawyer, it offends him. He thinks, 'Isn't there a way around this?'" Giuliani often preferred to barrel ahead and force his opponents to go to court to restrain him. "I think he believes in a very strong executive branch, but he has a litigator's mentality," said Criscitello. "Some executive leaders do not want to rule with the constant utilization of the judicial branch, but given his background as a litigator, he's very comfortable with this."

New York State's comptroller, H. Carl McCall, had a similar experience to Criscitello's when he tried to undertake routine audits of how well the city had provided services in areas ranging from restaurant inspections to policing. First, City Hall refused to provide the information. Then, in 1997, Giuliani booted McCall's auditors out of city agencies. McCall issued seventeen subpoenas in one month alone, all of which the mayor's office ignored. After two years, the state's highest court ordered his administration to turn over the information. By that time, however, Giuliani had already succeeded in the effort that mattered most to him: significantly delaying the comptroller's efforts. Not until 2000, for instance, would McCall be able to produce an audit of crime statistics, and when it finally appeared, the auditors noted that they were still unsure whether they had received all of the relevant material. As a "matter of policy," they wrote, City Hall had decided not to provide the customary document confirming that the data was accurate and complete.

Giuliani also unashamedly flouted the First Amendment to crush dissent both inside and outside his government. He lost thirty-five First Amendment cases in court. His administration was found to have shut down or delayed legal protests, illegally prevented its own employees from making protected public statements, and illegally prevented New Yorkers from gathering on the steps of City Hall. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals took the unusual step of reprimanding the administration, noting, "[W]e would be ostriches if we failed to take judicial notice of the heavy stream of First Amendment litigation generated by New York City in recent years."

In all of these cases, Giuliani was ultimately checked by the courts, even if his strategy had gained him valuable time. Sometimes, though, he got away with skirting the law because no one was able or inclined to restrain him. In 2000, when an off-duty security guard named Patrick Dorismond was shot and killed by undercover police officers, Giuliani released details from Dorismond's sealed juvenile record at a press conference—in plain defiance of state law. "The media would not want a picture presented of an altar boy," he said, "when in fact, maybe it isn't an altar boy, it's some other situation that

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may justify, more closely, what the police officer did." (Dorismond had, in fact, once been an altar boy.) In its defense, City Hall claimed—erroneously—that victims had no right to privacy after they were dead. Then it emerged that the administration had revealed details from sealed files to the media before, including the records of at least two police victims who were still alive. Although Mark Green wanted to sue the mayor's office for the leaks, the public advocate lacked the power to do so. The state attorney general didn't choose to pursue the case. Giuliani and his officials were never penalized.

RESISTING EVERY PRYING EYE

As his term progressed, Giuliani became increasingly unscrupulous in his manipulations of the bureaucracy to avoid oversight and transparency. He was especially sensitive about any agency charged with scrutinizing the NYPD. From the start of Giuliani's mayoralty, the need for monitoring of the police was evident. Between 1993 and 1996, complaints of excessive use of force by police rose by 56 percent. While some of the accusations may have been spurious, it was hard to know which ones, because the police department often "reinvestigated" the complaints internally and tended to find that they lacked merit. An outside body responsible for investigating police misconduct did exist—the Civilian Complaints Review Board, or CCRB. After he was elected, however, Giuliani had cut its budget by almost half. Although critics warned that the NYPD was getting out of control, Giuliani maintained that a "much better way to improve the police department is to get it to investigate itself." One month later, in August 1997, a Haitian immigrant named Abner Louima was arrested by police officers, taken to a Brooklyn precinct house, beaten, and then sodomized with the handle of a toilet plunger.

In response to the public reaction over the Louima scandal, Giuliani allocated more money to the CCRB. Still, he managed to influence the outcome of its inquiries by staffing it mainly with ex-prosecutors sympathetic to the police. (One prospective investigator said that his offer of employment was rescinded after the administration discovered that he had worked for Democrats as a teenager.) Eventually, the police department was investigated by the Department of Justice, the Civil Rights Commission, and the state attorney general. Nearly half of the felony gun cases brought by the NYPD's Street Crimes Unit were found to be unconstitutional in 1999.

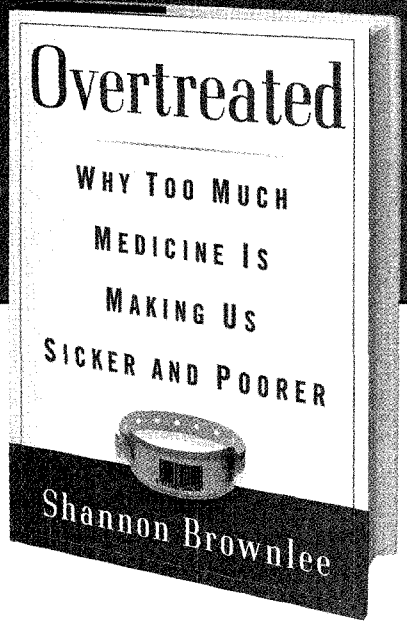
Giuliani understood that the currency of oversight is information, and he exercised more control over information than any mayor in recent memory. His administration denied information to the public, borough presidents, the city council, and the public advocate. It improperly concealed policy decisions, contract announcements, and routine business. It forced good government organizations to file Freedom of Information requests for data they had once been given as a matter of practice, including such information as the number of working drinking fountains in public parks.

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

—Jerome Groopman, M.D., Harvard Medical School and author of *How Doctors Think*

—Jonathan Cohn, author of *Sick: The Untold Story of America's Health Care Crisis—and the People Who Pay the Price*

—*Booklist* (starred review)



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—Susan Love, M.D., author of *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book*, president and medical director, Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation

"[Brownlee] presents a stunning but reasoned picture of the out-of-control, inefficient and often tragically ineffective U.S. health care system."
—*Library Journal*

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Once, the city even denied a Freedom of Information request inquiring how many Freedom of Information requests had been denied.

Reporters had an equally difficult time of it. The Yesrudys could be counted on not to leak to the press, and they enforced a policy of silence among subordinates. Press secretaries at city agencies weren't allowed to answer the most innocuous of questions without checking with City Hall first, including details about the water levels in the city's reservoirs that the municipal Department of Environmental Protection had once provided to the *New York Times* weather page. The NYPD made it harder for journalists to get basic details about daily crime. Although news organizations repeatedly sued for information and often won, it was expensive to do so, and the information often went out of date. One state judge admonished City Hall that the state's Freedom of Information law "provides for maximum access, not maximum withholding."

Once, City Hall even denied a Freedom of Information request inquiring into how many Freedom of Information requests had been denied.

THE FINAL DAYS

By 2000, Giuliani had exhausted New Yorkers with his habit of behaving as if he didn't need to observe the same rules as other politicians. Perhaps the epitome of this attitude came on May 10, when he announced at a press conference that he was separating from his second wife, without having informed her first. Two days later (on Mother's Day weekend), he allowed tabloid photographers to snap him and his mistress, Judith, taking a leisurely stroll. That year, his approval ratings fell to 37 percent (although they climbed back up to over 50 percent the following year). Still, his leadership would not have been remembered fondly were it not for the events of September 11, 2001. In the days following the attacks on the World Trade Center, Giuliani provided calm and comfort to a wounded city, and the gratitude felt by many New Yorkers erased much of what had gone sour in his mayoralty. It also kicked Giuliani's already abundant sense of exceptionalism into overdrive.

One day in October, near the end of Giuliani's term, Mark Green got a call from a Giuliani aide asking him to meet the mayor at a makeshift command center on the Chelsea piers. Green, who was running for mayor, had no idea why Giuliani wanted to see him. As it turned out, Giuliani wanted to extend his term by three months so that he could finish the recovery work he had started. Would Green endorse the proposal? Green was startled. "I said, 'Well, I'm a lawyer and a historian of sorts, and even Lincoln during the Civil War went ahead with a normally scheduled election in 1864. This does not strike me as a good idea.'"

Shortly after the meeting, Green said he received a call on his cell phone from Denny Young, Giuliani's soft-spoken counsel. "He made it clear to me that the mayor would be very unhappy if I didn't go along," Green recalled. "I've been in public life long enough to know what was being communicated." Green feared that if he declined, Giuliani would use his refusal to damage his mayoral campaign. Reluctantly, he agreed to Giuliani's request. Giuliani eventually dropped the proposal after a public backlash convinced the state legislature to quash it.

One of Giuliani's final acts as mayor was to transfer 2,118 boxes filled with all his mayoral papers to a warehouse in Queens known as the Fortress, under the supervision of a private nonprofit that he controlled. This was an unprecedented move in city history; the law states that mayoral records are public property. (After Michael Bloomberg was elected, the city council passed a law that retroactively legalized Giuliani's action.) Seven years later, however, it's still unclear how many papers have been made available to the public. The Bloomberg administration, which is supposed to oversee the collection, doesn't know what it originally contained, and thus has no way of discerning whether any documents have been withheld.

PRESIDENT GIULIANI

During his time as the mayor of New York, Giuliani's operating style became so ingrained, so pervasive, that we can imagine with some confidence what he might do with the power he would inherit as president. Already, he has surrounded himself with a group of accomplished legal advisors with especially muscular views of executive power and close ties to the Bush administration. Chief among them is Ted Olson, the solicitor general in Bush's first term. As head of the Office of Legal Counsel in the Reagan Justice Department, Olson helped develop the "unitary executive theory," which envisions a constrained role for Congress in regulating the executive branch.

By Giuliani's own admission, he would, as president, perpetuate many of Bush's boldest assertions of presidential authority. In 2006, Giuliani told the *Wall Street Journal* that he would probably keep the detention center at Guantanamo Bay open, saying that its conditions had been "grossly exaggerated." This year, at a New Hampshire town hall meeting, he refused to say whether the Bush administration had gone too far in denying the protection of the Geneva Conventions to terrorist suspects. Giuliani has also indicated that presidents have the power to indefinitely detain American citizens without trial. At a debate, he declared himself opposed to torture but refused to say whether he would outlaw waterboarding, instead offering that interrogators should perform "any method they can think of."

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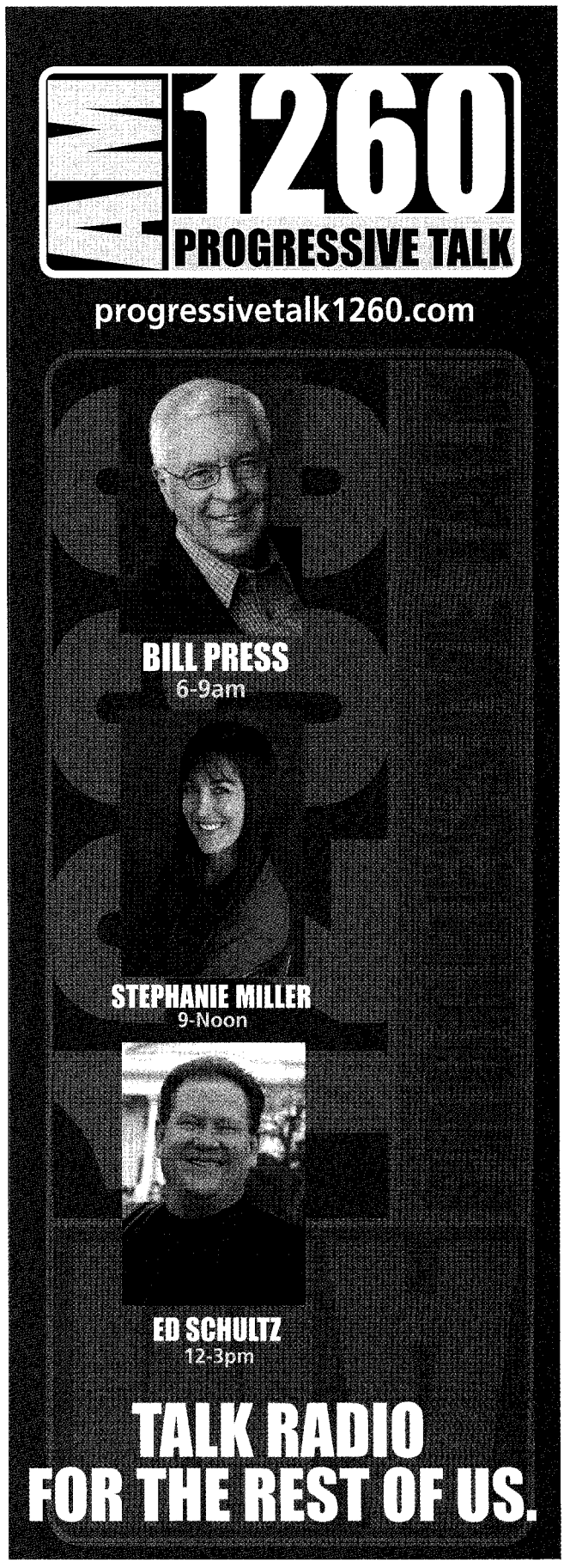
What is most disturbing is the likelihood that a Giuliani administration would venture beyond the expansive claims of executive authority staked out by the Bush White House. For instance, though Bush has demanded that Congress fund the war in Iraq, he has never openly questioned Congress's power of the purse. Giuliani, however, told a reporter that the president has the right to provide money for the troops to stay in Iraq even if Congress withdraws funding. Similarly, Bush has implied that critics of his Iraq policy are unpatriotic, but he has not declared that the government can silence their voices. This September, echoing the sentiments that he repeatedly attempted to enforce as mayor, Giuliani said that the "General Betray Us" ad paid for by the left-wing group MoveOn "passed a line that we should not allow American political organizations to pass."

One might minimize the significance of these kinds of statements as the loose talk of a candidate trying to impress conservative primary voters—indeed, that is how the press has generally treated them. To believe that Giuliani is merely grandstanding, however, is to ignore his history. If he reaches the White House, he will almost certainly do what he did at City Hall: punish dissent, circumvent the law, conceal the workings of the government in secrecy, and use his litigator's gifts to obstruct mechanisms of oversight and accountability.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. once observed that the central conundrum of the American system of democracy is "to devise means of reconciling a strong and purposeful Presidency with equally strong and purposeful forms of democratic control." One of the weaknesses in the American form of government is that a leader, if determined enough, can thwart the constitutional checks on his power. The Founders weren't omniscient, and the governing apparatus they devised contains weak points that require a degree of good faith from its participants if the system is to work. In the past, with the possible exception of Richard Nixon, even the most forceful presidents didn't subvert the system of checks and balances as a matter of ideology or routine. Bush, Cheney, and Giuliani are different from each other in many ways, but they are alike in their scorn for the separation of powers.

Defenders of the Bush administration's unreserved exercise of executive authority are fond of quoting Woodrow Wilson's observation that the president of the United States "is at liberty, both in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can. His capacity will set the limit." Less often quoted is Wilson's unequivocal rejection of the "illegitimate means"—such as overriding or ignoring acts of Congress—by which the president can subvert the rule of law to exert his will. "Such things are not only deeply immoral," Wilson wrote, "they are destructive of the fundamental understandings of constitutional government and, therefore, of constitutional government itself." The Bush administration has walked a considerable length down such a road. Giuliani, were he to be elected president, would set off running. WM

Rachel Morris is an editor of the *Washington Monthly*.



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Ambush in War Zone D

The Vietnam War draftees who fought with valor and saved my life

By Wesley K. Clark

Something touched my foot, and I was instantly awake. I squirmed around to face a dark figure looming over me, the muzzle of my M-16 still directed down the trail a few yards away through the jungle. He projected his voice in a stage whisper:

"It's o-five thirty, sir."

I turned and sat up, my eyes blinking in the dark. My answer was also a whisper.

"Okay, thanks. Get the other platoons on the horn. Make sure everyone is okay."

Other men were stirring around me, and I slowly rose up to a crawling position, stretching my arms and legs. We had been lying on the jungle floor for the past six hours, a platoon of about twenty American infantrymen, strung out some ten meters back in the bushes from the edge of a heavily used path that cut through the thick underbrush. I was a captain and the company commander, but we only had two lieutenants to command our three platoons so I was out with the platoon on this operation. We had arrived at this place just before midnight the night before and assumed an ambush position off the trail. Half the platoon had stayed awake while the others slept for two hours, then they reversed their roles. Fifty percent security was high, but we were in the heart of enemy territory, and maintaining that level of alert was literally a matter of life or death.

I was fully clothed and wearing my jungle boots, which were laced up and tied tight. That was another feature of sleeping in the field during Vietnam: no one unlaced his boots at night. It was okay to take off your helmet before you lay down. Then you just lay out flat, rifle at the ready, and tried to stay awake while staring at the dark and listening to the night. And if you weren't extremely tough on yourself—and everyone else—you fell asleep even when you thought you were awake. You were on the ground like any other animal, save only that you had your rifle in your hands and ready for use. If I ever found someone with his boots off or web gear lying around somewhere—where he couldn't reach into his ammo pouch at his waist and pull out the next twenty-round magazine—I would have had to come down on him. But I'd found that personal fear was pretty good at keeping the discipline taut, and this morning the troops were a little anxious. I knew they all had their boots on.

We were out to find the enemy, to interrupt his movements, to cause him to rethink his attack plans, and to hinder the assembly of his forces that could threaten Saigon. As a mechanized infantry unit, we ordinarily rode around on armored personnel carriers, or APCs. But here we were on the morning of February 19, 1970, hoping that the enemy would make the mistake of coming down that trail into the kill zone of our ambush.

The previous evening we had set up about a half hour before sunset: we just backed into the jungle off the trail and lay down. The flank security hadn't even set up its defenses when I heard the rattle of a machine gun from the left. Two long bursts, and twigs and vegetation began to fall around me like rain as the rounds cut well overhead. Then silence.

Larry Burrows / Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images

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Apparently, an enemy patrol moving down the trail had seen movement as the flank security took up their positions, and they had opened fire to cover their retreat. But they didn't hit us, and we never saw them. We had returned no fire, and I was pleased that the troops had maintained their fire discipline. I passed the word to reorient so as to provide stronger all-around security. After darkness fell, I moved the platoon, because I didn't want that enemy force to double back and find us.

We moved a couple of thousand meters up the trail, pulled off, and set up a hasty ambush, waited, and moved again, around 10:30 p.m., to the overnight position. This was real, and the troops sensed it. This time, after I was woken up, I glanced left and right and lay back down. We were at the crucial time, just like hunting: the game would be moving around dawn, and every man had to be ready. The sky was still jet black, and I knew it wouldn't start to soften into gray for another ten or fifteen minutes, when the gray would fade to light fast. Then the sky would brighten above the jungle canopy as full dawn came, almost exactly at 0600 hours.

We waited another hour, to see if we would have any action. But by 0700, there had been no movement down the trail or in the jungle. Every man had been awake and ready to use his weapon for more than an hour, and it was time to move. I stood up, took a last sip from my canteen, chewed on a piece of date nut roll, and motioned to the men on my left and right, ready to move out. We still had a few minutes, and I looked around. All the men were up, silently adjusting their loads. There would be no fires this morning, and no heat tablets would be lit to boil water for instant coffee. As my men drank from canteens or took their last bites from C rations, I went over our operations plan again in my head.

I was with dismounted elements of the 2nd Platoon of A Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (mechanized), from the 1st Infantry Division, about fifteen infantrymen, led by their platoon sergeant, carrying rifles, grenade launchers, and one of the two M-60 machine guns each platoon had. And I had my command group—my two radio telephone operators (RTOs), one handling the company net and the other the battalion net, plus a four-man element from the company's Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol. This team of seven or eight highly skilled, frighteningly fearless, and completely reliable soldiers—or "Lurps," as we called them—usually operated by themselves as an independent unit while performing various reconnaissance missions for me. They were the best men I had, and, like the platoon as a whole, many of them were draftees. It has often been said, in the years since the war ended and the all-volunteer force was created, that conscripts were inferior soldiers, and that Vietnam draftees in particular couldn't or wouldn't fight. But that wasn't my experience. The draftees I served with fought with great skill and exceptional bravery. They may not have wanted to be there then, but had they not been, I would not be here today.

On this particular operation, I made sure that my four-man Lurp team—Sergeant William Bodine, Specialist Frank Juresh, Specialist John Gonzales, and Specialist Mike

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McClintic—came along and stayed near me in case I needed their raw courage to get us out of a tight spot. We were not heavily armed, but we were very flexible, mobile, and, we hoped, able to move fast when needed. And on that early morning, as we restlessly girded up for combat deep in the enemy-controlled jungle, we wanted more than anything else to fall on a surprised enemy force, pin it in place, and hammer it.

In the winter of 1969–70, the 1st Infantry Division, commonly referred to as the Big Red One, was deployed as part of a defensive arc north of Saigon. It was expected that, over the next few weeks, large Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army forces would try to make a major attack on Saigon from the north, just as they had done in February of 1968 and '69. If that was their plan, we suspected they would be staging the attack from an area of heavy jungle some twenty miles northeast of Saigon, a plot of ground about the size of Manhattan that had been a Communist stronghold for many years. It was known as War Zone D, and the rough, jungle-covered terrain was not crossed by any roads. Our job now was to try to make contact with a major enemy force by running patrols through the more open jungle just south of War Zone D. Once engaged, we knew we could use our heavy artillery and air support to pulverize them. But this did not turn out to be as easy as it sounds, for making the contact that would pin the enemy in place was not a simple task.

We were out to find the enemy, to interrupt his movements, to cause him to rethink his attack plans, and to hinder the assembly of his forces that could threaten Saigon.

As soon as we moved into the area to the east of Saigon, it became clear to me that the tracked and heavily armored APCs in which our soldiers rode and fought might not be the right way to reach the enemy elements south of War Zone D. In some regions, of course, this was the best way to fight the war, and we ran a couple of mounted operations, with columns of APCs, usually accompanied by M-48 tanks, crashing and smashing through the jungle.

That's how we advanced most of the time. However, I often ended up having to put a dismounted jungle-clearing team out in front, their job being to partially clear our way forward with axes and chain saws. And while it seemed there was almost no jungle terrain that our armored beasts couldn't plow through, and no enemy force that could stand up to their fearsome firepower, the thick jungle often meant slow going. But our vehicles were also loud. Very loud. The thunderous, roaring noise of their diesel engines coupled with the crashing of the trees and jungle undergrowth they smashed through could literally be heard for miles. Since our goal was to engage the enemy rather than scare them away, I thought we might better perform this specific task by conducting patrols on foot. I discussed the matter with our battalion commander, and with his approval that was the way A Company began to operate.

In the early afternoon of February 18, we launched this particular patrol after having dismounted from our APCs a few hundred meters from the main highway that ran through Long Thanh. The APCs were left behind with drivers and gunners, along with the company command post vehicles, while I took the dismounted elements of the platoon and my command group and moved north into the jungle on foot. This meant, of course, that we would be leaving behind both the heavy firepower provided by the machine guns mounted on the APCs and the protection offered by their armored sides. But it also meant that our movement would not be betrayed by the unmistakable noise our armored vehicles made.

In open country, a small infantry unit moves while spread out in a formation shaped like a roughly elongated circle, with plenty of firepower available front and rear as well as to the sides. But in the jungle this tactic usually wasn't practical and was seldom employed unless enemy contact was imminent. If we had used such a formation, we would have had to move cross-country through the jungle, and that would have been not only slow, but also very difficult and noisy. In order to move effectively, therefore, we had to walk staggered out single file on one of the many trails made by the woodcutters in the area. And that became our common formation on patrol. While moving through the jungle, we usually spread our column out so that there were about ten to fifteen feet between men, with more space added if the vegetation thinned out.

Normally we moved with a couple of men up front, the first being the point man, who walked "on point," and a backup to reinforce him, known as the slack man, who was supposed to "take up the point man's slack." After this point team came a few riflemen, followed by the platoon leader and his RTO. If I were along, I would be somewhere in the middle of the column, behind the platoon leader. But in this case, we had no platoon leader, so I moved close to the front, and I used my company sniper team as our point team to guide us through the jungle. They were the top soldiers in the company, and they often traveled with me.

When we went on our first patrols on the trails south of War Zone D, we were all tense, ever alert to any noise or movement that might seem unusual. But unfortunately for us, we didn't make much contact with the enemy. And although we walked on many trails that seemed to be heavily used, we had only fleeting contact with enemy soldiers: a sighting through the jungle, a burst of fire exchanged, and

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then nothing. This was frustrating, to say the least, but we were doing better dismounted than mounted, so we decided to continue the dismounted effort. That was what we had done the previous day, and we had moved steadily northeast on a large trail for some three hours. But our movement had been rather slow, and I estimated we were only five kilometers north of our start point, information I relayed to battalion when we stopped for the ambush. Now we were another three kilometers north and ready to move again.

My company RTO carried the twenty-five-pound radio in addition to his other gear. It was always turned on, and he kept it tuned to a frequency used by our battalion back in the tactical operations center (TOC), a logistical nerve nodule where our battalion commander was positioned with his field headquarters and staff, and that would be the source of air and artillery support should I need either or both. As the men swallowed the last hurried bites of their breakfast, we were ready to go, and I had to keep the TOC informed of our location so that they could keep artillery fires registered in front of us as we moved. I fumbled in my jungle fatigues for the CEOI—the communications-electronics operating instructions. I kept it tied on a lanyard attached to my uniform. It was classified—and under the new system, we changed call signs every twenty-four hours, aware that the enemy could monitor our nets. That day, my random call sign was something like H6A for the company, and as the commander I was sixty-seven. I held the handset up to my ear, pushed the broadcast button, and spoke softly into the microphone.

Battalion knew only our approximate location, but if we got in a jam and needed artillery support, the first round fired would be white phosphorous, whose bright flash could be more readily seen than those of high explosive rounds. While from beneath the jungle canopy we probably wouldn't be able to see the bright flash these rounds made, I had been in this situation before, and was confident that, just from their sound alone, I would be able to use the radio to adjust the impact of artillery fire until it hit on the enemy positions. It was already a beautiful morning—bright blue sky, low humidity—Vietnam during the dry season. That was a strange feature of the weather in Vietnam: near the equator, full daylight lasts almost exactly twelve hours each day, and there are only fifteen or twenty minutes of gray dawn or dusk before the sun comes up or after it goes down. That balance holds steady through the whole year, whether the season is rainy or dry. One of the few reliable truths we could depend on, I mused, was the sun's regularity all year round. Of course, during rainy season, the bright sun was regularly obscured by everything from light clouds and mist to heavy thunderstorms.

But we were in the dry season now, and as my men fell into their Indian file formation, ready to move down the trail, I felt good. We had made contact, we had moved, we were on to something in this area. The mission was: find the enemy. We moved down a wide, hard-packed trail, sunlight splashing green all around us. I had told the point man to stay on a main trail headed generally to the north, and we passed intersections with other wide trails. Was it only woodcutting in this area, I wondered? I looked at the vegetation for signs of movement, and looked down for footprints. But the trails were smooth, and broad enough for four men to walk abreast. We moved patiently, slowly, everyone on high alert, stopping every few hundred meters to send riflemen off to either side and check for enemy presence in the jungle around us. But there was nothing.

Around 1130 we found a small clearing, large enough for a small helicopter to land, and I radioed in the location. That day I was to have lunch with the battalion commander at his operations center, get the update on the big picture from battalion, and review my plans in detail with him. The flight out and lunch were uneventful. A couple of hours later, I rejoined the platoon and my command group in the clearing in the jungle, and we began to move again. I planned to move a few more kilometers and then call the M-113 armored personnel carriers that were the company's main transportation and weapons platform, to pick us up in late afternoon. That was the advantage of mechanized infantry, and I intended to use it—in and out, short foot patrols, and then back to the tracks.

A spray of bullets ripped the air above us, and I realized that this young man from Michigan, drafted when his college deferment ended, had just saved my life.

It kept everyone alert and avoided the kind of monotony that could lead to a fatal distraction. But by 1600 I was getting a little concerned; we still had more than three kilometers to go to the linkup point, and we had less than two hours of daylight. I was the fourth or fifth in the column when we crossed a three-foot-wide bamboo footbridge over a beautiful little stream. Then the point man halted and turned back toward me, beckoning with his hand. I moved up the column, and was standing next to him as he turned and pointed forward.

"Sir, the trail just ends right there."

He was right. Suddenly, the big broad trail vanished. There was thick jungle all around us.

"It just ends right there, huh?"

"Yes, sir, looks that way."

"Hmm." I looked forward into the vegetation. Nothing. I looked down at the compass in my left hand. We hadn't drifted off azimuth. Okay, I thought, we'd just stay on course. We were bound to pick up a trail somewhere up ahead if we kept moving in the same direction. I didn't want to backtrack, and the jungle floor was flat. It wasn't going to be hard to simply move forward. I turned around toward my left to

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get the rest of the column moving, but as I turned, I sensed that I had dropped my rifle and suddenly became aware of a loud buzzing noise. I was confused. I never dropped my rifle. Not ever. Cardinal sin! And the buzzing must be hornets. Had I hit a nest? As I turned back to get my rifle, I saw something small and white on the back of my right hand, and glimpsed a dark stain on my jungle fatigue trousers right below the right knee. It was like my brain had been bypassed.

"I've been shot!" I shouted, still in the act of reaching down for my rifle.

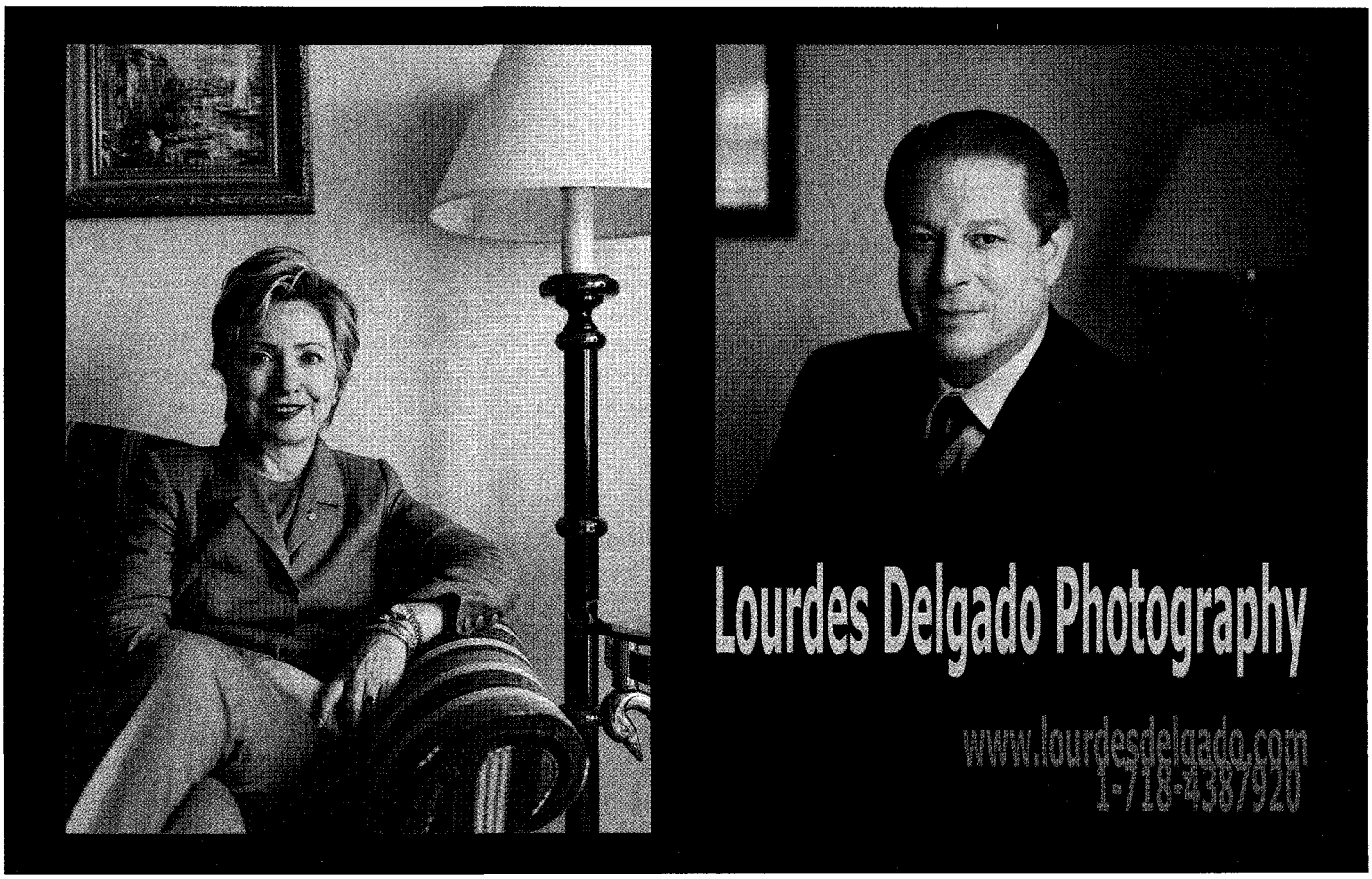
"Get down!" Specialist Mike McClintic shouted back as he dove at me. He hit me hard, and I went down. As he knocked me out of the line of fire, a spray of bullets ripped the air above us, and I realized that he had literally just saved my life. In that instant, this young man from Michigan, drafted after his college deferment ended, became my hero for all time: without his raw courage and quick reactions in the face of fierce enemy gunfire, I clearly would have been killed right then and there. Flat on my face I scrambled around and down the slight slope toward the bamboo footbridge. I was alive and I was moving, though I couldn't feel or use my right hand or my right foot. My overriding attention at that instant, however, was focused on survival as bullets were zinging overhead and ricocheting off the hard-packed earth. But a few heartbeats later, my training came flooding back and my responsibilities as company commander took over.

"Get the machine gun up! Set up a base of fire!" I had to shout the commands, and of course that attracted more enemy fire. Sergeant David Bodine, the point man and head sniper, and McClintic were with me, McClintic a few feet in front and farther up the slope. They were returning fire, and as I watched, a right angle flap opened up on McClintic's jungle shirt, torn by a bullet as it grazed his back. I scanned left and right, hoping the enemy wasn't maneuvering around us. I could tell something was wrong with my foot: it wasn't moving right, and now I could clearly see the broken bone sticking out of my hand. I wasn't in pain, but I really didn't want to be right here, right now—not like this. For an awful instant I remembered my three-month-old son at home, my son whom I hadn't even seen yet.

No, it wasn't going to end like this, and I suppressed the thought. Focus. Fight. Take charge.

"Get that gun going!" I shouted again, as I looked back under my left arm and saw the first troops come across the little footbridge. They were here. And they came running. Those peace-symbol-lovin', foulmouthed, cussin', war-hatin', draftee American soldiers came, right into the firefight. They rushed right into the smack of the bullets, and the whine of the ricochets. They were called forward, and they came! God, I loved them!

The machine gun opened up, a long burst, sweeping the jungle, and men joined in with their rifles as the incoming fire continued to pour in. In the deafening roar of battle I hollered for the radio, and my RTO squirmed over to me,



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maneuvering his load and still trying to keep down. I called the battalion commander, reported our location, requested artillery fire, and asked him to help converge the other platoons on my location. Mass forces. Cut off the enemy's maneuver. We had them fixed. Now we had to finish them.

"Sir, stay still! You've got a sucking chest wound. Don't talk!" Suddenly there was a medic crouched over me, along with my RTO, both trying to hold me still as he wrestled a bandage around my chest. They could see the blood pouring out of my back, and just as they were trained, they were half risen up, risking their lives to try to keep me alive. But I knew it wasn't a sucking chest wound, as I wasn't having any trouble shouting. I pushed them off as they protested.

"Give me water! That's what I need." I gulped half a canteen. I wasn't thirsty, but I knew I was bleeding, and I didn't want to go into shock. This was my command, and I was in battle. The don't-want-to-be-here feeling was gone. I knew we could do this!

There was still no sign of any enemy movement on the right as the incoming fire began to drop off. We had fire superiority now, and the machine gun continued to roar a few feet to my left. I heard the first artillery spotting rounds fall a few hundred yards deep in the jungle, artillery fire that would have to be adjusted by us over the radio so that it fell on the enemy's positions. Then there was what seemed like a long pause in the incoming fire. This was our moment. "Machine gun, shift fire to the left. You men on the right, on your feet, move forward and get them!"

And they did. They really did. They stood up, men from south Texas and the Bronx and Kansas and California, in a firefight in a jungle in Southeast Asia. Men who had been plucked out of their lives, threatened with jail if they refused, some who held master's degrees, others who hadn't finished the tenth grade, they were firing from the hip and shoulder, a dozen men, moving into the jungle to sweep what turned out to be a small enemy base camp. This was my company. These were my men. And I was still flat on my face, struggling to keep the medic off of me so I could direct the fighting. Overhead I could hear the distant whine of the battalion commander's Loach coming in to take a look. He was on the radio, working to get the artillery and reinforcements into the area, while I was running the fight on the ground. This was how it was supposed to work. I could hear the shooting and my men's shouts as they swept deeper into the jungle. Now some thirty meters or more to our front, they began to move to our left front as the enemy withdrew in that direction. After having walked into their surprise fire, we had now gained the upper hand and were driving the enemy before us. And though they were no longer even in sight, the adrenaline unleashed by this firefight was still coursing through my body. I was angry, happy, elated, determined, proud, embarrassed. But I knew I had to shut down the machine gun to avoid hitting our own men.

"Cease fire!"

And then the shooting stopped. It was over.

Soon enough, a medevac bird appeared on station. They let down a "jungle penetrator," no more than a strap on the end of a cable. My RTO and the medic roped me into it and the helicopter hauled me up.

As I rose, I looked down and saw the little piece of jungle we'd been fighting over. Didn't look like much. And I saw the men of my company for the last time as we lifted into the air.

A strange mixture of feelings flooded through me as they waved and our craft rose. I tried to wave back at them, and I felt awful about leaving them behind; they were my friends and family. They were American soldiers. They did what needed to be done, in spite of danger, in spite of fear, and, for many, in spite of not wanting to be in the Army at all. They had saved my life and overcome part of the enemy force. You had to have faith in us, in who we were, and what we could do. Faith against the odds, faith against the wiseass, too-cool attitudes that seemed to dominate in the enlisted ranks but quickly disappeared in combat. Faith. I loved those men, and I missed them already.

As the helicopter pulled around and surged back toward Saigon, a medic began to work over my wounds. I felt the ache and the throbbing, and I knew this could get uncomfortable. But I dared to think again about my family, about my young son, Wesley, and to thank the Good Lord for helping us that day. Even in the worst of circumstances, I mused groggily as the helicopter climbed ever higher, life can be very good indeed. WM

General Wesley K. Clark, the former supreme commander of NATO, led alliance military forces in the Kosovo war in 1999. He is a fellow at the Ron Burkle Center for International Relations at UCLA and author, most recently, of *A Time to Lead*, from which this article is adapted. (*A Time to Lead* is copyright © 2007 by the author and reprinted here by permission of Palgrave Macmillan.)

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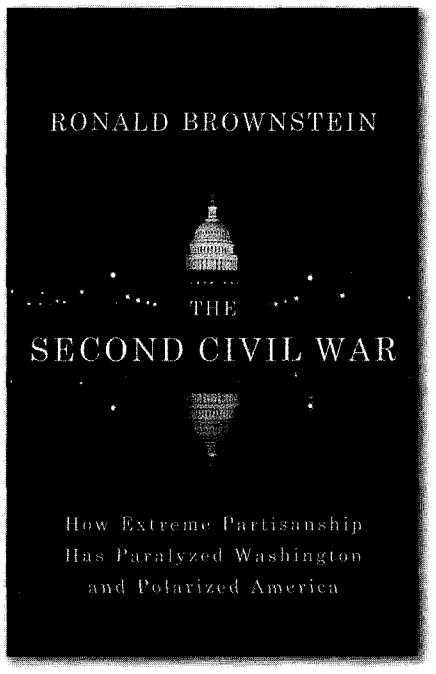
Divide and Concur



The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America

by Ronald Brownstein
Penguin Press HC, 406 pp.

Bipartisanship in Washington is dead. Maybe now we can get something done.

By Mark Schmitt

There's no doubt that America's political parties have undergone a major transformation in the last two decades, and that we now have, for better or for worse, a center-left party and a center-right party (although at the moment, more right than center), pitted against one another, rather than the jumble of the past. The question is whether this process, which Ron Brownstein, until recently a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, calls the "Great Sorting-Out," is a bad thing, a good thing, or just a fact of life that isn't going away.

For most establishment pundits, the situation is self-evidently bad, and Brownstein is no dissident from that consensus. In the first few pages of his book—the most comprehensive examination yet of the trend toward strong and ideologically defined parties—he locates the explanation for all of America's problems in the fact that both major political parties equally fail to "set boundaries on their competition" and refuse to compromise in the effort to solve those problems. Responsibility for the federal budget deficit, dependence on foreign oil, the fact that one in six Americans lack health insurance, the failure of comprehensive immigration reform, and the failure to "rebuild economic security for the middle class" lies not at the feet of anyone in power, but rather on a syndrome in which the powerless and the powerful are equally to blame.

This premise, with its comforting symmetry, is familiar, but at least since the turn of this century it's also been demonstrably wrong. The reason we don't have universal health care is not that the parties can't settle their differences about how to provide it, but that one party, the one that held all the power until this year, doesn't favor universal health insurance, and doesn't pretend to. With a couple of newsworthy exceptions such as California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, that party doesn't share Brownstein's interpretation of the problem. On this and other issues, Dick Cheney (for instance) seems quite content with things as they are.

Brownstein argues that each of the things he identifies as a problem calls for "comprehensive solutions that marry ideas favored by one party and opposed by the other." On the budget, he says that Democrats would reduce the deficit entirely through tax increases, Republicans would lower it through spending cuts, and that the true solution—a balance of the two—cannot be achieved because each party rejects half of that solution. But in the six years that Republicans held unchecked power, they rejected both halves of Brownstein's solution, while when Democrats were in power, they embraced both. The budget isn't balanced now because the party that has been in power doesn't see the problem in Brownstein's terms: it favors tax cuts above all other priorities. On immigration, most Democrats favored the balanced solution that Brownstein favors, while only a tiny minority of Republicans (which happened to include the president but only twelve of his party's senators) did so.

The sociology of Brownstein's symmetric explanation for an asymmetric situation, and the fact that it is so widely shared by people whose insight into modern politics is otherwise unfailing, is as interesting as the argument itself. What makes it so appealing? Perhaps it is the culture of journalism, in which it is acceptable to have a view about

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the country's problems and solutions, such as the budget or health care, but would be considered "partisan" to acknowledge that only one party shares that view. More likely it is simply an aesthetic preference, one I can fully appreciate. When I worked in the Senate in the 1990s, nothing was more exhilarating than to sit behind the dais of the Senate Finance Committee and watch the great moderates of both parties—Republican Senators Packwood, Danforth, Chafee, and Durenberger on one arm of the dark wood horseshoe, Democratic Senators Bentsen, Mitchell, Boren, Pryor, and Breaux on the other—as they worked valiantly, and usually in vain, to find common ground in their pursuit of the national interest. But those men, especially the Republicans, were the late stragglers of what Brownstein calls the "Age of Bargaining," and they belong to history now, as relevant as Henry Clay.

Brownstein's book has a considerable advantage over the geriatric grunts of nostalgia about the good old days that usually pass for discussion of partisanship, namely an attempt to understand the history of strong and weak parties in the United States, and particularly the evolution from what James MacGregor Burns referred to as the four parties of the middle twentieth century (the liberal and conservative wings in each party) to the ideologically coherent duality of today. Unfortunately, until it reaches the Reagan years, most of the history takes the form of potted morality lessons—partisan, bad; bipartisan, good—of a type familiar from George W. Bush's "lessons of history" speeches. Brownstein tells us that Woodrow Wilson failed to win ratification of the League of Nations because he was just too partisan, a drastic oversimplification of a sad, complicated episode, involving Wilson's personal insularity and pique, opposition from the left as well as the right, a rapid groundswell of postwar isolationism, and, finally, Wilson's sudden and incapacitating illness.

Closer to the present, Brownstein gives a flawless account of the rise of the interest groups of the left and then the right in the 1960s and '70s, but he makes a key error of interpretation. He sees these groups as worsening partisanship, whereas in fact, single-issue or single-constituency groups are antithetical to strong political parties, which are balanced coalitions of multiple issues and interests around a broadly shared but loose agenda. The Sierra Club and NARAL do more than just pull the Democratic Party to the left on environmental issues or choice. They seek to claim citizens as environmentalists or pro-choice voters, rather than as Democrats or Republicans. And because they are able to—and need to—find allies on both sides of the aisle, they have allowed certain Republicans to establish a second identity as environmentalist or pro-choice, and thus have *facilitated* the age of bargaining by propping up the moderate wing of the Republican Party, much as the National Rifle Association was able to validate and prop up certain Democrats in conservative districts until 1994. The reemergence of strong and ideologically coherent parties has posed a challenge for these groups and the kind of politics they practiced, which thrived in the absence of strong parties. (Put simply, without Republicans like John Chafee to endorse, with their cause entirely embraced within one party's coalition, groups like NARAL become pretty irrelevant.)

This reflects a larger misunderstanding, which is to see ideological polarization and strong parties as one and the same. Interest groups and ideological extremists such as the antitax Club for Growth seek to leverage the influence of energized or wealthy minorities, while political parties seek to win the support of a majority. A real party is a locus of considerable bargaining in itself, exemplified by the process by which Democrats came to accept pro-life candidates and a pro-life Senate majority leader in the interest of winning on a broadly shared majoritarian agenda. The Democratic Party of the '60s and even the '90s, which incorporated constituencies and elected officials whose differences could not be bridged by any kind of bargaining, created the ground in which these alternative political vehicles thrived, and tended to pull politics away from a broader vision of citizenship or a national agenda. A party captured by its extremes will lose its ability to construct a majority: that's the reality that the Republicans are confronting today.

W. E. B. DuBois wrote in 1903 that "the problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the color line." To Brownstein it is the problem of the party line. But DuBois was right. Parties have been shifting ground, making the history of the concept of "partisanship" elusive. Other divisions, particularly the South-North divide first over race and civil rights and now over scale of government and vision of economic justice, are constants. Despite its title, *The Second Civil War* does not acknowledge how much this second conflict has been a legacy of the first, as well as an accident of Reconstruction that placed the most reactionary and antigovernment faction into the same unworkable party as the immigrants, workers, and ideological liberals of the New Deal coalition. For decades, a "conservative coalition" of those southern Democrats and western and midwestern Republicans stood athwart both parties using the tools of seniority and the filibuster, with all the power of a majority political party but without the accountability (pro–civil rights Democratic voters had no way to avoid strengthening the hold of southern committee chairs), holding back civil rights and the more expansive visions of the later New Deal. The age of bargaining that Brownstein celebrates was really about the endless and rarely successful negotiating to find a way around this unmovable bloc. When FDR or LBJ succeeded in breaking through, it was not just because they were bipartisan, but because they

A real political party, to capture a working majority, and with limited ability to work through cross-party negotiation, must capture the center. Right now, it is the Democratic Party that claims the center.

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were able to form a de facto, temporary liberal party—like LBJ's forty-four Democrats and twenty-seven Republicans in favor of the 1964 Civil Rights Act—to overcome the institutional clout of the conservative coalition.

When a committee of the American Political Science Association issued a report in 1950 calling for "A Responsible Two-Party System," like the strong and ideologically coherent parties we have today, they had as clear a sense of the problem to be solved as Brownstein does in his first chapter: for them and the reformers who followed, it was civil rights, civil rights, civil rights. They dreamed of a party that could elect a president and a congressional majority based on emphatic, coherent promises of civil rights, health care, and international engagement, and have those public preferences translate into action. Brownstein dismisses the 1950 report, saying, "Be careful what you wish for," but in fact the report wears well and makes a still-relevant case for parties that can offer the American people a clear and engaging choice of direction, and that can be held accountable for the success or failure of that choice.

After the institutional reforms of the 1970s, the conservative coalition slowly moved into the Republican Party, where the southern heirs of the older Democratic segregationists for a time wielded power as absolutely as the James Eastlands and Richard Russells of that earlier time. (One of Brownstein's best chapters traces the evolution of Trent Lott from Democratic staffer to Republican leader, pairing it with the story of liberal advocate Ralph Neas's journey away from the Republican Party.) But unlike that earlier time, the voters of the whole nation were able to make a choice and, in 2006, rejected the direction that the southern reactionaries would take the country.

This evolution is fascinating, and it is not without its disadvantages. But we now have parties that offer a choice. Brownstein sees them pulling further and further away from the center, but I think that's based on seeing the recent Republican Party and extrapolating a larger trend in both parties. A real political party, to capture a working majority, and with limited ability to work through cross-party negotiation, must capture the center. For a brief and idiosyncratic period, the Republican Party was able to exercise Karl Rove's strategy of eschewing the center, but history will reveal that approach as one of failure, not of success. Right now, it is the Democratic Party that claims the center, which is why it is the only party that embraces the solutions that Brownstein describes in his first page as centrist solutions. I think this will change over time, and after some soul searching and crisis within the Republican Party, eventually we will have a true center-left and center-right party—both of which meet the 1950 definition of "responsible parties"—and a vibrant contest between them. It's taken me a while to give up my attachment to the age of bargaining, but there are many advantages to this new age. WM

Mark Schmitt is a senior fellow at the New America Foundation and a columnist for the *American Prospect*.

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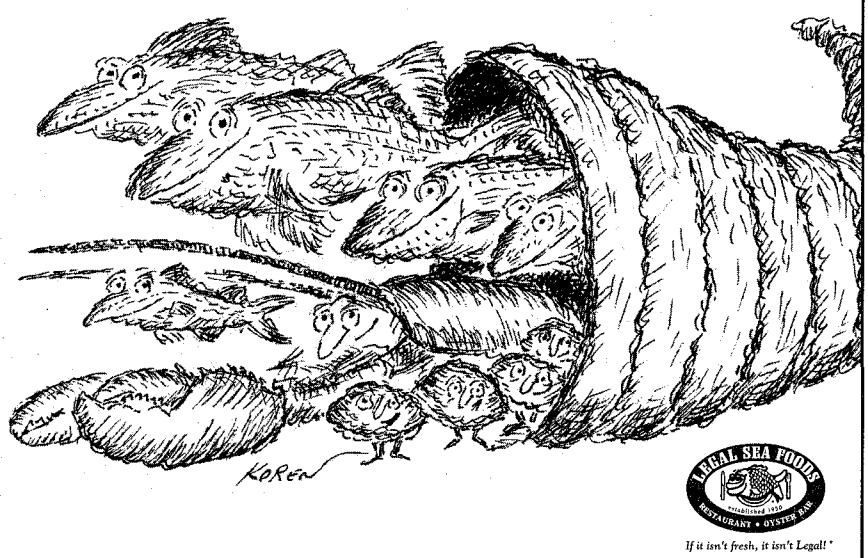

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The Strategist of Small Things

Does Mark Penn's relentless focus on microdemographics really make a broader liberal agenda impossible?

By Ed Kilgore

Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes

by Mark J. Penn with E. Kinney Zalesne
Twelve, 368 pp.

If *Microtrends* had been published under the name of coauthor E. Kinney Zalesne rather than Mark Penn, it would probably have been a quiet best-seller with a cult following. Instead, it's being evaluated, for better or worse, as a glimpse into the mind of Hillary Clinton's chief strategist and pollster. And in many progressive circles, Penn is often thought of as exemplifying the dark side of Clintonism. The reasons are legion: his corporate background and current position as CEO of a massive public relations firm noted for union busting; his association with Dick Morris and the alleged "triangulation" strategy for Bill Clinton's reelection campaign in 1996; his penchant for media-friendly catchphrases for key voter subcategories (e.g., soccer moms and office park dads); and his informal reputation among rival pollsters for opaque and questionable methodologies.

A sprawling book like *Microtrends*, which purports to identify seventy-five distinct subcategories (sixty-four American, and eleven international) of people who have yet to get noticed by corporate and political marketers, provides plenty of targets for Penn detractors. In a review for *In These Times*, Ezra Klein cherry-picked some of the sillier and sloppier sections of the book, and constructed a demolition not just of Penn, but of political pollsters generally.

But it's important to understand that *Microtrends* isn't primarily a political book; it's classified as a business book by the publisher, and by most bookstores. And truth be told, it is probably aimed at that book-consumer sweet spot occupied nearly a generation ago by its obvious model: John Naisbett's *Megatrends*, which for a couple of years in the early 1980s was required reading for business executives, politicians, and pretty much anyone who wanted to appear well informed. It's a niche book about niche markets, destined to become, in its "quality paperback" iteration, a staple of airport bookstands.

Moreover, the book isn't a compilation of gleanings from Penn's own polling. Some of the "microtrends" are derived from census data, some from election and business reports, and some from surveys conducted by other polling firms. The mixed sources are compounded by mixed interpretive themes that aren't always of equal sophistication or seriousness. Klein's review, for example, dwells on an item entitled "Southpaws Unbound," and quite properly mocks Penn's suggestion that more left-handers could mean more creativity in our society. But that item really seems aimed at telling corporate readers they can make a bundle customizing products and services for the growing "southpaw" population, and that's almost certainly correct.

As it happens, only five of the microtrends in this book are described as being about political preferences, and of those, one ("Newly Released Ex-Cons") is actually about crime policy, while another ("Christian Zionists") is very old news, and a third ("Militant Illegals") is clearly out of date, given this year's backlash against illegal immigration. A fourth political microtrend ("Swing Is Still King") is really an effort to refute a trend identified by others: the supposed disappearance of swing voters. And the main value of Penn's analysis

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here has nothing to do with trends, macro or micro, but flows from his commonsense but often ignored observation that "turning" a swing voter has much greater pound-for-pound electoral value (producing a net gain of two votes) than "mobilizing" a nonvoter (a gain of one net vote, or perhaps less if your effort helps the other side mobilize a potential voter as well).

That's not to say that the nonpolitical microtrends in this book don't sometimes have considerable political import. At its best, *Microtrends* helps debunk outdated stereotypes of how Americans live which are often the foundation for outdated political judgments. One example is "Second Home Buyers," which illustrates the increasingly middle-class nature of multiple home ownership, and warns that efforts to curtail tax subsidies for second homes will offend a lot of people who aren't necessarily Republicans. And a whole host of sections on gender roles, work-family balance, and commuting patterns challenge a multitude of common assumptions about family, workplace, and transportation policies.

One object of this book is to show the increasing irrelevance of stereotypes—like the suburban soccer mom—that Penn himself helped create.

Indeed, one clear object of this book is to show the increasing irrelevance of one stereotype—the suburban soccer mom—that Penn himself famously helped create during the 1990s. In this respect, Penn is reminiscent of the great statistics-savvy baseball analyst Bill James, who often shrewdly noted that his numbers-averse "traditionalist" critics were defending ideas about how to win baseball games that were based on limited or outdated statistics. Penn's critics often fear that his goal is to undermine broad progressive political themes by encouraging an unprincipled slicing and dicing of the electorate to identify various swing targets. But there's nothing inherently wrong with understanding the electorate in all its complexity, and forswearing microanalysis guarantees willful ignorance but does not guarantee a macropolitics of progressive principle.

While there is plenty of useful material in *Microtrends* for people who don't view it as some sort of insight into the dark arts of the Clinton campaign, two of Penn's frequently repeated big-picture arguments aren't so compelling.

For one thing, there's the basic premise of the book—that microtrends have replaced megatrends as the things to watch, due to the disaggregating effects of modern technology. But a very large chunk of the microtrends Penn is writing about are derived from a single megatrend: the emergence of women into the external labor force, with all the vast ancillary effects of that phenomenon. "Trends" are typically the result of both centrifugal and centripetal forces, and Penn's assumption that the former are increasingly undermining rather than reflecting or underlying the latter isn't self-evidently correct.

And secondly, Penn's passionate belief that "numbers don't lie" often obscures legitimate questions about how particular numbers are derived, particularly in public opinion surveys.

A good illustration of that problem is the microtrend that Penn calls "Impressionable Elites," which has created a fair amount of buzz in political circles. Based entirely on a survey by Penn's firm, this item purports to show that voters earning more than $100,000 per year are much more likely than those earning less to say they vote on the basis of candidates' character rather than their stands on issues. Thus, concludes Penn triumphantly, in one of those "counterintuitive" observations he loves: "The elite information circle is dominated by people who live in the world of the top 10 percent, and while in the past that helped drive discussion to more substantive levels, today it does just the opposite." Take that, elitist disparagers of the substantive but charisma-challenged Hillary Clinton!

But the question Penn asked about candidate characteristics is a classic "leading question" that invited a particular "right" answer; who, after all, wants to admit they vote on the basis of superficial rather than substantive factors? It's entirely possible that cynical elitists are no more inclined than regular folks to care about "character," but are simply more likely to admit it.

I emphasize this issue because the framing of survey questions in a way that invites "right" answers can produce numbers that do, indeed, lie. A particularly significant example occurred in 2004, when polls (not by Penn's firm, by the way) showing strong voter aversion to partisanship and to negative campaigning led to a series of bad strategic decisions by John Kerry's campaign. Americans may well want to believe they don't respond to negative campaigning, but they do, and they did in 2004 when Kerry was buried by a barrage of misinformation and mockery from his opponents. You don't have to think voters are fools or knaves to understand that observing their behavior is sometimes as important as respecting their stated opinions.

Since as much of *Microtrends* is based on analysis of behaviors as opposed to opinions, I'm reasonably sure Mark Penn isn't as totalitarian in his faith in opinion surveys as he sometimes seems to suggest.

But that brings me full circle: what, if anything, does *Microtrends* tell us about Hillary Clinton's campaign? Your guess is as good as mine, but I'll wager that HRC's campaign, particularly if it gets to a general election, will devote some serious resources to microtargeting, that corporate-marketing-based practice of customized voter ID and messaging that reportedly did wonders for George W. Bush in 2004. That doesn't mean Clinton will run on "micro-initiatives." As the Bush campaign showed, you can certainly run on a broad-based, even simplistic, overall campaign message and still use sophisticated knowledge of voter subgroups to design particular appeals to particular audiences. I'd be surprised if some of the seventy-five microtrends in this book aren't reflected in targeted e-mails and phone calls at some point—probably along with a few hundred others that you can't read about in any airport, at least until election day. WM

Ed Kilgore is managing editor of the *Democratic Strategist*, an online magazine and weblog site.

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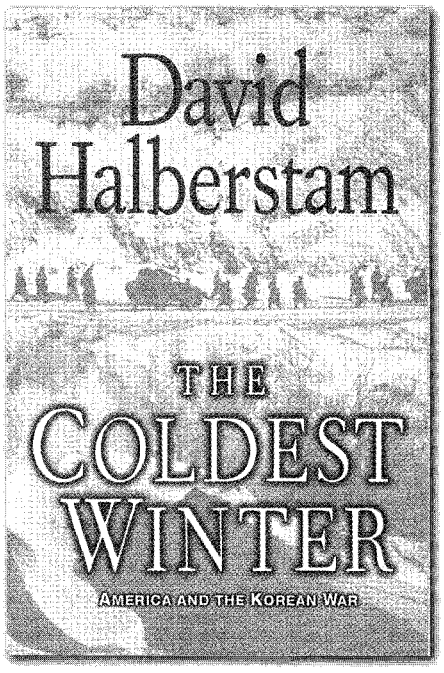
The Korean War's Rumsfeld

Examining Douglas McArthur's debacle, David Halberstam found a familiar pattern.

By Barbara Demick



The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War

by David Halberstam
Hyperion Press, 719 pp.

With binoculars slung round its neck and a jaunty officer's cap on its head, a sixteen-foot-tall bronze statue of General Douglas A. MacArthur stands on a bluff in Incheon, South Korea. It overlooks the very spot where thousands of U.S. troops, under MacArthur's command, landed in 1950 to drive back the North Korean forces. Devotees regularly pay homage to the Korean War general with bouquets of chrysanthemums accompanied by admiring notes—"Long Live MacArthur, the savior of freedom," read one when I visited a few years back. But much larger numbers of South Korean students and trade unionists have chosen this same place for a different purpose: to stage unruly protests in which they unfurl their *cri de guerre*: "Tear it down," they chant. "Tear it down."

MacArthur's detractors call him a war criminal. They contend that his lies and blunders unnecessarily prolonged the war in Korea, causing tens of thousands of deaths and leaving the country as the last front line of the cold war. This view of the American legacy in Korea has prevailed among younger generations of South Koreans for at least a decade. Now along comes *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*, a 700-page-plus accounting of the conflict by the late David Halberstam. It is Halberstam's last book, completed shortly before his April 2007 death in a car accident. *The Coldest Winter* is a methodical dissection of many of the illusions about the Korean War, and it would seem that David Halberstam agreed with the South Korean dissidents: indeed, where they have failed in toppling General MacArthur from his pedestal, Halberstam has succeeded.

To the extent that most Americans think about the Korean War at all, it is as a selfless military invention to prevent a ruthless Communist dictator from overrunning South Korea. The damning particulars were never reexamined to the degree that they were after the conflict in Vietnam. Except for those who actually fought there, Halberstam notes, Korea became something of a black hole in U.S. history. As the years passed after the ceasefire in 1953, Americans wanted to know less about the conflict, not more. "Perhaps all wars are in some way or another the product of miscalculations," Halberstam writes. "But Korea was a place where almost every key decision on both sides turned on miscalculation."

The Communist invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, caught America by surprise. "Where is Korea?" asked one officer stationed in Japan upon hearing that North Korean forces had crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, the line separating the country into two parts. Although the United States had itself partitioned the Korean peninsula after the defeat of the Japanese—and installed its own man, Syngman Rhee, in Seoul—Korea was still viewed as an irrelevant backwater. In a speech in January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson described Korea as being "outside the U.S. security perimeter."

Acheson's remark would have the same repercussions as April Glaspie's insinuation to Saddam Hussein in 1990 that the United States would not be interested if Iraq crossed the border into Kuwait. North Korea's Kim Il Sung—as well as his backers, Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin—understandably made the assumption that the United States would not intervene in a war between North and South Korea. But after Communist troops

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stormed across the border, the United States responded: a U.S.-led coalition was put together, under the United Nations flag. The Incheon landing was a spectacular success—the UN forces chased the North Koreans back across the thirty-eighth parallel, where they belonged—and by mid-October, UN troops occupied Pyongyang.

MacArthur, who was directing the show from Tokyo (where he was also supreme commander of U.S. Occupation forces in Japan), flew to Korea to take a bow. "Any celebrities here to greet me?" he asked as he stepped off the plane—adding, in a mocking reference to Kim Il Sung, "Where is Kim Buck Tooth?"

MacArthur was a towering figure because of his World War II exploits; as supreme commander of Allied forces in the southwest Pacific area, MacArthur had liberated not only the Philippines from the Japanese, but most of Southwest Asia and Australia as well. With the strategic use of air power to influence a land war, he effectively denied the Japanese access to both air and sea supply routes. The first victories in the Korean War reflected that earlier glory, and elevated his stature—as well as his ego—to new heights. ("A colossus bestriding Korea until the nemesis of his hubris overtook him," is how MacArthur's biographer William Manchester puts it.) MacArthur was utterly convinced that anti-Communist forces could capture the entire Korean peninsula if U.S. troops pushed all the way to the Yalu River, which forms the border between Korea and China. The United States haughtily rejected a peace proposal advanced by an Indian envoy to reestablish the border at the thirty-eighth parallel, and chose to fight on. Just as the Communists had assumed the United States would not intervene, MacArthur believed the Chinese would not enter the war.

So it was that MacArthur sent thousands of American troops marching into the largest military ambush of modern military history. The men were disastrously ill-equipped; in temperatures plunging at times to twenty-five degrees below zero, some of them were clothed only in the summer dress uniforms they'd worn to celebrate the capture of Pyongyang. As American soldiers slogged northward, their supply lines became more attenuated, the terrain more foreboding. Arctic temperatures enveloped the mountains. (This was the "coldest winter" that gives Halberstam's book its title.) When some people later wrote of American troops killed in their sleeping bags, one veteran noted with fury, "We didn't *have* sleeping bags." Halberstam lavishes hundreds of pages on the march to the Yalu River, and watching the catastrophe unfold in slow motion is like watching a road accident: it's simultaneously excruciating and compelling.

Some officers on the ground were convinced they were walking into a trap set by the Chinese. But in Southeast Asia, MacArthur was God, and no one could contradict the word of God: The Chinese, he declared, would not intervene. When an enemy soldier was captured and told his interrogators that he was Chinese, and the report was sent back to MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, the intelligence staff there claimed he was in fact an ethnic Korean.

When incontrovertible evidence emerged of a Chinese presence in the area, MacArthur's men claimed they were merely guarding electric installations near the Yalu River. When at last MacArthur was forced to admit that there were Chinese troops inside North Korea, he estimated the number at 16,500 to 27,000. In reality, the number was 250,000.

According to Halberstam, MacArthur always "played in nothing less than the theater of history—as if life were always a stage and the world his audience." He didn't understand modern-day Asia, or listen to anyone who did. "He seemed not to care how and why Mao had come to power and seemed to have little interest in the forces that the revolution had unleashed," Halberstam writes. "He showed astonishingly little curiosity about who his enemy was and why they had been so successful in the past."

MacArthur didn't spend a single night in Korea, instead flying in from Tokyo just long enough to strut for the cameras and make bold pronouncements. "You can tell [the soldiers] when they get up to the Yalu, they can all come home. I want to make good on my statement that they will get Christmas dinner at home," he said in late November 1950, just as the Chinese were closing the trap around the American forces.

The senior officers in Korea rolled their eyes at the absurdity of MacArthur's optimism. They knew he was critically underestimating the Chinese, but had no standing to challenge a man who postured himself as the emperor of Asia. The gulf between the officers on the ground and those in Tokyo had become ever wider:

> *In the Dai Ichi building (MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo), Korea was a distant, somewhat orderly, generally manageable place, a map that you could pin to the wall, where the distances were not that great and divisions were only a half inch or an inch away from each other; whereas out here leading the Second Division as it moved toward the Chongchon River, it was more like an unmanageable military hell, hills turning out to be mountains, winds blowing ever harder, temperatures dropping almost by the hour, every day bitterly cold, except the next day would be even colder and make you long for the cold of yesterday.*

The rest, as they say, is history. The last week of November 1950 was one of the worst in the record of the U.S. Army, as hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers who had been lying in wait struck out with a terrible fury. Some U.S. infantry regiments lost two-thirds of their men. The remnants did not so much retreat as flee, along narrow, icy mountain passages under a barrage of Chinese fire. By the time they stopped running, the U.S. position was back near Seoul. Another year and a half of fighting later, the front line was reestablished around the thirty-eighth parallel—back where it had started. The United States eventually accepted an unsatisfying armistice that remains in place today, in the tangle of barbed wire, land mines, and tank barriers that comprise the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

Douglas MacArthur, predictably, did not accept the blame for the failures in Korea. Instead, he lashed out at everyone

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else: the Chinese, his own officers, and President Harry Truman. Enraged by humiliation, he demanded the right to use all the tools at his disposal—including the atom bomb—and blamed the defeat on the White House's refusal to give him free rein. He sabotaged a promising peace initiative that would have ended a futile and destructive war.

Truman had always been wary of MacArthur; in the aftermath of the Korean War, he saw him as a dangerous Napoleonic figure who could possibly drag the United States into an all-out war with not only China but the Soviet Union as well, possibly resulting in a nuclear holocaust. In April 1951, the president fired MacArthur, a move that took enormous courage. "Firing MacArthur," writes Halberstam,"was like tearing pages out of your most prized history book."

Halberstam's account is not entirely new. He draws from several excellent military histories—Clay Blair's *The Forgotten War*, Max Hastings's *The Korean War*, Manchester's MacArthur biography, and the works of Bruce Cumings, a historian who has been one of the harshest critics of the American legacy in Korea. Where Halberstam advances the story, however, is in the intersection between the military and the political. His narrative weaves deftly between Korea, Japan, and Washington, D.C., as he re-creates the atmosphere of the perfect storm that led to the Korean debacle. From the U.S. perspective, he relates, the war in Korea was never really about Korea itself, but about China. American conservatives were reeling over Chiang Kai-shek's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, and as the cold war turned hot, anyone who dared to say that U.S. troops should not advance all the way to the Yalu River would have been labeled an appeaser.

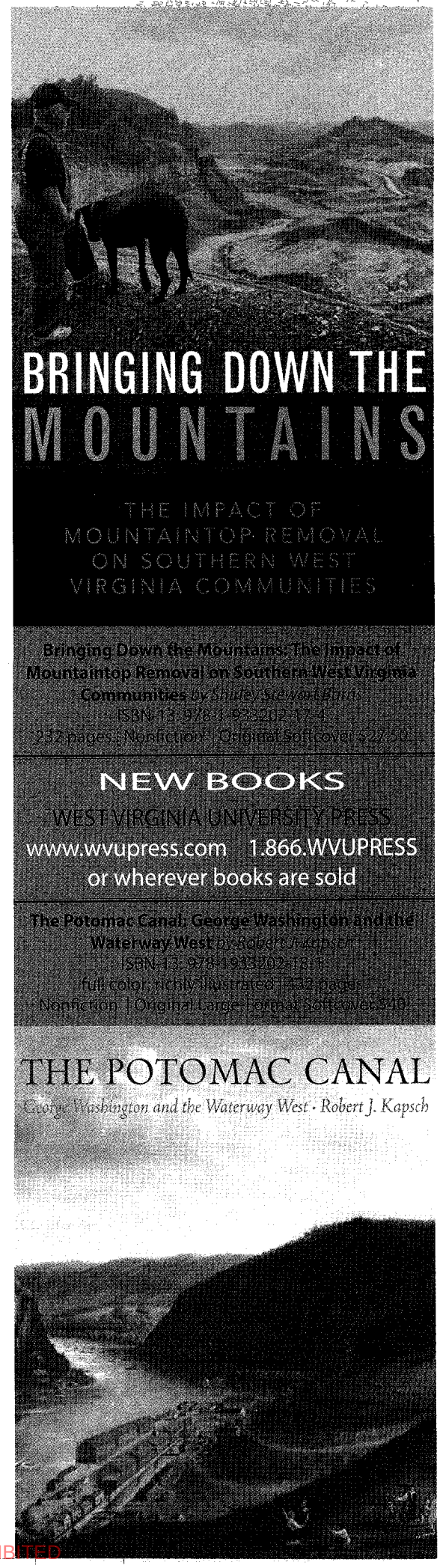
When reading Halberstam's account, one can't help being reminded of yet another war in which intelligence was fabricated to suit a political agenda, a war in a misunderstood country where American troops arrived poorly equipped and misinformed, duped into believing they would be welcomed as liberators. A war in which the leadership declared that the mission had been accomplished when in fact it had hardly begun.

Unlike other Korean War scholars, whose accounts were written against the backdrop of previous military successes, Halberstam has the advantage of seeing what followed: his view of the Korean War is filtered through later failures. The first of these is Vietnam; the second, of course, is the current war in Iraq. (Halberstam knew what he was talking about in both cases: *The Coldest Winter* could be considered a prequel to his earlier masterpiece, *The Best and the Brightest*, about the Vietnam era. And the last piece Halberstam wrote for publication was an essay published in the August issue of *Vanity Fair* on the Bush administration's lies about Iraq.)

Midway through *The Coldest Winter*, Halberstam states flatly that MacArthur and his intelligence staff (led by a cryptofascist named Charles Willoughby who later served as an aide to Spanish dictator Francisco Franco) "doctored the intelligence in order to permit MacArthur's forces to go where they wanted to go militarily" and in the process "were setting the most dangerous of precedents for those who would follow them in office." It was this precedent that in 1965 allowed Lyndon Johnson to exaggerate the threat posed to the United States by Hanoi, and, more recently, set the stage for the Bush administration to, according to Halberstam, "[manipulate] Congress, the media, the public, and most dangerously of all, itself with seriously flawed and doctored intelligence, [and send] troops into the heart of Iraqi cities with disastrous results."

With these words, Halberstam makes clear why he believed that another book about Korea was needed, a half century after the war there ended. In an age consumed by conflict in Iraq, *The Coldest Winter* makes the Korean War more relevant than ever before. It also fills in an important missing piece in Halberstam's chronicles of the twentieth century, and is a more than fitting swan song for a remarkable journalist. WM

Barbara Demick is a foreign correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* who was bureau chief in Seoul from 2001 to 2006. She is writing a book about daily life in North Korea to be published next year by Doubleday's Spiegel & Grau.



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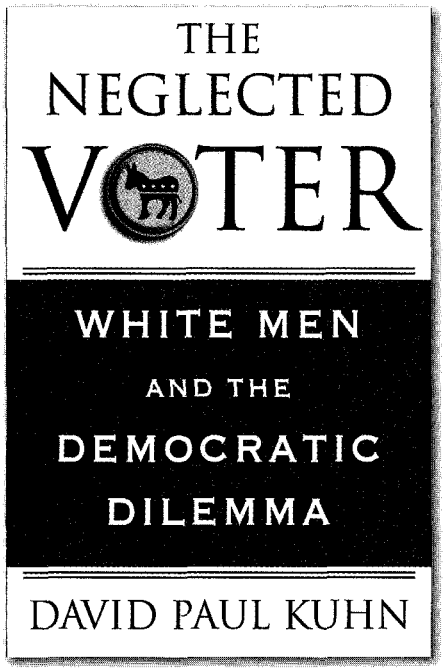
Color Me Skeptical



The Neglected Voter: White Men and the Democratic Dilemma

by David Paul Kuhn
Palgrave Macmillan, 270 pp.

The shifting loyalties of white male voters

By Ruy Teixeira

David Paul Kuhn covered the 2004 presidential campaign for CBS News and currently writes for the *Politico*, the new Washington tabloid specializing in political news and analysis. His new book, *The Neglected Voter*, has a very simple thesis: If you want to understand the Democrats' problems over the last several decades, keep your eyes on the white guys; you needn't worry about anything else. White men decided many years ago that they didn't like Democrats, and the next thing you knew we had Nixon, Reagan, and Bushes I and II. Kuhn mentions other social groups in passing, but mostly to clarify why white men are so ticked off at the Democrats. There's something charmingly retro about this approach, and indeed, a great deal of Kuhn's book reads like it could have been written twenty years ago.

Retro or not, Kuhn's book does provide a useful service, by highlighting something that is quite real—what he calls the "white male gap." It's true that Democrats perform very poorly among white men. In the last two presidential elections, Democrats have trailed the Republican Party in that demographic; Republicans won 60 percent of the white male vote over the Democrats' 36 percent in 2000, and 62 percent over 37 percent in 2004. White men comprise a hefty section of the American electorate—36 percent in the 2004 election—and it's difficult to win elections when your party starts out so far in the hole with such a large demographic. And, as Kuhn rightly stresses, this performance is substantially worse than Democrats' performance among white women (hence the "white male gap"). While Democrats had a 24-point deficit among white men in 2000, their deficit among white women was only 1 point; in 2004, Democrats lost white men by 25 points and white women by 11.

This isn't a pretty picture, and Kuhn deserves credit for reminding Democrats forcefully of this problem. This is especially so in an era where most prescriptions for Democratic success steer away from demographic analysis in favor of very broad recommendations like appealing to the emotions (Drew Westen's *The Political Brain*), kicking ass (Naftali Bendavid's *The Thumpin'*), and having big ideas (Matt Bai's *The Argument*). Kuhn is right to stress that not all voters are the same, and that specific groups of actual voters have to be reached to ensure success.

That said, the book has some serious problems, beginning with the fact that it isn't a particularly good read; it is, in fact, a slog. Since the author makes essentially one point—that "dogmatic liberals" have dissed white men in pretty much every way possible and turned them off to the Democratic Party—over and over again in every one of his twenty chapters, the exposition gets quite repetitive.

But the more serious problem is the story he tells, not how he tells it. Start with his claim that the white male gap is essentially the fulcrum of American politics and the source of the Democrats' woes. The gap is certainly important, but why is it more important than Democrats' problems with, say, married voters, religious voters, or (to pick an old favorite of mine) white working-class voters? There are a lot of different ways to slice and dice the American electorate, and a reasonable case can be made—by suitable fiddling with the numbers—that many demographic categories have played a "decisive" role in elections (that is, they can account, in a strictly quantitative sense, for a party's success or lack thereof). So establishing, as Kuhn does, that white male voters were decisive in this sense does not actually show they were more important

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than other demographics. Kuhn should have made some effort to address this issue and make the case that his preferred demographic is, in fact, the important one, be it on quantitative, historical, or sociological grounds. But he is too busy beating his drum to do so.

Nor does he grapple with the fact that not all white guys think and act in the same way. In 2006, for example, while white men as a whole voted Republican by 9 points (53 percent to 44 percent), single white men voted Democratic by 15 points, white men with a postgraduate education voted Democratic by 2 points, and young white men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine voted Republican by only a single point. These are important differences, but Kuhn ignores them in favor of treating white men as an undifferentiated mass, collectively abubble with resentments toward Democratic liberals who show them no respect, couldn't care less about them, and know nothing about their lives. Perhaps this level of generality made the book easier to write, but the lack of detail and nuance about what is, after all, a very large and heterogeneous group also makes it less convincing.

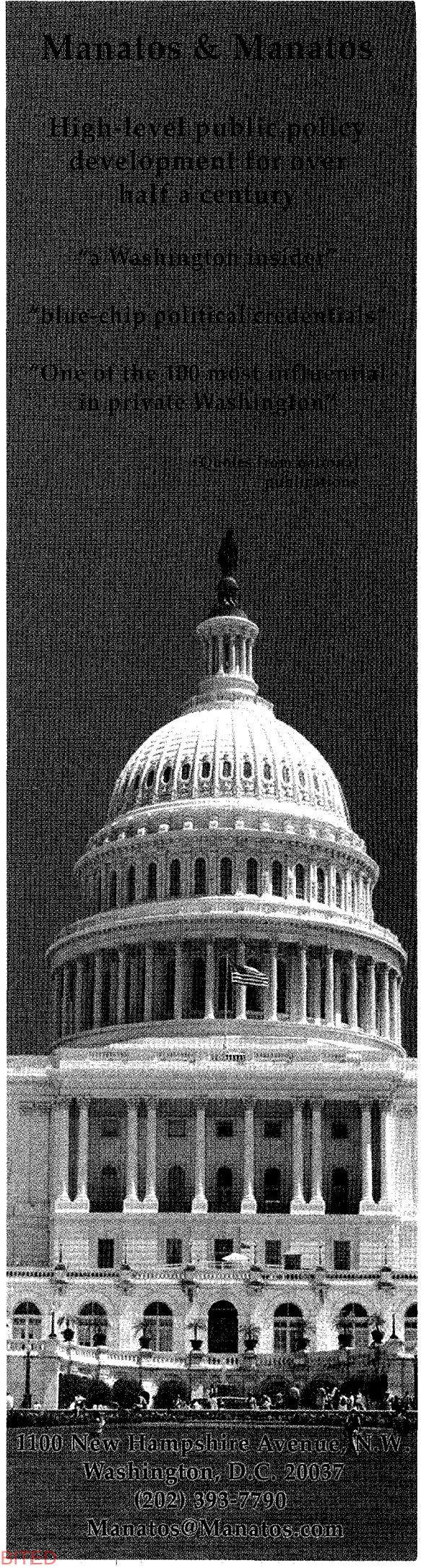
Related to this, Kuhn shows little interest in the important ways demographic trends are altering the very population he's writing about. Not all white men, of course, are alike: single white men act very differently than married white men, and also make up an increasing proportion of white men as a whole. So do highly educated white men. And the younger generation of white men (the millennial generation), who are much less hostile to the Democrats than their elders, will become the dominant generation within the white male population in the next couple of decades. One would think these changes would have been worth mentioning.

But as I mentioned above, Kuhn has one simple story—the emasculation of the Democratic Party—and he's sticking to it. That story is rooted in one particular image of white men and their fate, an image that doesn't allow much room for consideration of demographic and social complexity. It *does* allow for many chapters with titles like "The Angry White Male: Kicked Out and Charged With Abandonment" and "The 'Feminine Party' in Wartime: Bush, Kerry, and Bravado." Or the entire chapter on "The Value of Grit," which becomes a repeated trope throughout the rest of the book. For example, why did Kerry lose the 2004 election? He didn't have grit. Silly me, I thought it had something to do with Bush being an incumbent president in quasi-wartime. But with Kuhn, it's one size fits all.

Speaking of 2004, one thing Kuhn doesn't dwell on is that the white male gap *narrowed* in that election and that it was the movement of white women toward Bush that gave him his (actually rather narrow) victory. How inconvenient for Kuhn's thesis. More inconvenient is the election of 2006, which seems to suggest that the Democrats' white male gap can be mitigated and overcome without heroic efforts to get rid of "dogmatic liberals" and embrace the "political culture of white manhood." In that election, the white male gap was down to 8 points, as white men supported Republicans over Democrats by 9 points (53 to 44 percent) and white women supported Republicans by a point (50 to 49 percent). These figures represented big shifts toward the Democrats among both groups, but particularly among white men. It may be that the Republicans' days of running up supermajorities among white men are over, a victim of conservative failure to deliver much more than military debacles overseas, and continuing social and demographic change among the white male population, which has made the Republican Party a less congenial home for them.

In short, these are not your father's white guys, and Kuhn's book would have benefited greatly by taking that into account. WM

Ruy Teixeira is a joint fellow at the Center for American Progress and the Century Foundation, as well as a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he is codirecting a project on "The Future of Red, Blue and Purple America." His most recent book is *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, written with John Judis.



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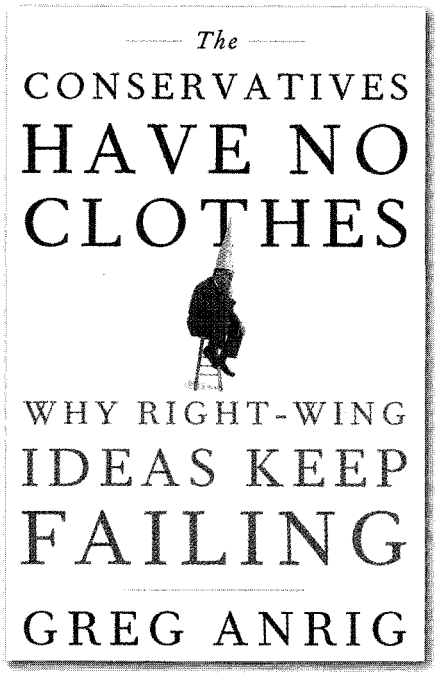

The Conservatives Have No Clothes: Why Right-Wing Ideas Keep Failing

by Greg Anrig
Wiley, 288 pp.

Are conservatives just incompetent? Or is it their ideology? Hey, why choose?

By Mark Schmitt

As even the most committed conservatives have begun to recognize the scale of the debacle, foreign and domestic, of the seven years during which they have held unchecked power, they have begun to plot a slick escape from the consequences. "Oh, that?" they will say. "That wasn't *conservatism*. That was something completely different." It started out as conservatism, they say, but was corrupted by the culture of Washington, by Jack Abramoff or Tom DeLay. Or, they say, so sorry, we misjudged George W. Bush, failed to see how incompetent he was. Or, as in recent tributes to Karl Rove on his resignation from the White House, they will admit that the single-minded focus on winning elections, bending all policy to that purpose, destroyed the conservative soul. If they have the chutzpah of Rove himself, they will blame Hillary Clinton.

If there were any justice in the world, such claims would take their place in history alongside those of the old Marxists who, as Alan Wolfe noted in these pages last year ("Why Conservatives Can't Govern," July/August 2006), insisted that the only problem with communism was that it had never been properly implemented. The noble dream, they argued, should not be judged by its real-world manifestations. Maybe so. But in the real world, ideologies are judged by their consequences.

Such justice is unlikely for the recent American right, however, and the evasion of responsibility has been made easier by Democrats' nearly total focus on individual actors: George W. Bush and, to a lesser extent, Rove and Dick Cheney. Thus the spate of books with titles like *The Lies of George Bush* and *Bush's Brain*. Now Rove is gone, DeLay is gone, and in sixteen months Bush and Cheney will join them, but their brand of conservatism may never be held to account for its failures in practice.

Two years ago, writing in the *American Prospect*, Sam Rosenfeld and Matthew Yglesias coined the phrase "the incompetence dodge" to describe those liberal supporters of the Iraq War who hid defensively behind the claim that the war was a good idea in the abstract but they could not have known it would be executed so poorly. In his new book, *The Conservatives Have No Clothes: Why Right-Wing Ideas Keep Failing*, Century Foundation vice president of policy Greg Anrig extends the argument of the incompetence dodge to nearly every aspect of conservative rule. Anrig's principal contention (to oversimplify somewhat) is that ideas that turn out badly were probably bad ideas to begin with. Anrig posits that each failure—from the Bush administration's planning and conduct of the war to its mishandling of Hurricane Katrina to the results of tax cutting and privatization at the state and local levels—was the result of a real-world experiment in a flawed ideology rather than just the fault of a few incompetent or nefarious individuals.

And for the most part, he succeeds. It is important to be reminded, for example, that Bush's extreme claims of executive power are not just arbitrary power grabs, but are rooted in two decades of theorizing, from leaders of the conservative Federalist Society, about the "unitary executive," and even the appointment of incompetents such as FEMA director Michael Brown was based in conservative ideology and conservative think tanks, particularly the contempt for institutions of government and impartial bureaucracy. And deregulation has been at the heart of conservatism, resulting in tangible, fatal consequences in auto safety, health, and the environment.

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But in some cases, Anrig begs the question, Is conservatism possible without the particular extremes of the Bush era? Or, to paraphrase political philosopher Michael Walzer, can there be a decent right? There's nothing inherent in conservatism that says, "Fire all U.S. attorneys who aren't 'loyal Bushies,'" or "Appoint losers to life-and-death positions in government." As a counterexample, we have the Reagan administration, which was a decidedly conservative government that—with some notable exceptions—appointed reasonably competent people and adjusted course in response to results. (When the 1981 tax cuts led to deficits, the Reaganites raised taxes, and when their own excesses of executive power led to the Iran-Contra scandal, Howard Baker was made White House chief of staff and the adults were put in charge.) Washington is full of middle-aged Justice Department lawyers and Environmental Protection Agency scientists who will tell you that all through the Reagan and Bush I years, no less than in the Carter and Clinton eras, they did their jobs and their professional recommendations were honored, without interference, and only in the second Bush administration did that change. In some cases, it seems unfair or unwise to generalize from the particulars of the worst administration in history to conservatism writ large.

It's possible to imagine a very conservative regime that would limit the scope of government to a few core activities—defense and disaster relief surely among them—and carry out those limited missions with professionalism. I wouldn't vote for such a regime, and that's the problem—neither would most Americans. George W. Bush has held office at a time when citizens haven't actually wanted limited, conservative government; they've wanted government that would do more, from prescription drug benefits to aid to education, and to win elections conservatives had to deliver some version of those things. Yet they did so in a passive-aggressive way, colored by their contempt for the very government they were expanding. It is this particular combination, and not conservatism alone, that gives birth to some of the debacles Anrig notes, such as the Medicare prescription drug program.

Anrig's argument is richer and more persuasive when he moves from the special case of Bush to more generalizable examples, such as the long history of deregulation and conservative policy at the state and local levels. His strongest chapter—at least for me, because it changed my mind—examines experiments with private school vouchers in Milwaukee and elsewhere. I have supported school choice, or at least a more careful and thorough experiment with the effects on both public and private school students than has been conducted to date, so this chapter was a bracing read, making clear that to support choice conditionally puts one in bed with people who have no interest whatsoever in the outcomes of such an experiment. Anrig doesn't so much show that private school choice has failed—although it appears to have—as that conservatives have manipulated and broken every honest effort to determine whether it has succeeded or failed, because the answer is of no interest to them. Improving educational outcomes is a lower priority, if a priority at all, than breaking down successful public institutions and implementing the gospel according to Uncle Milton.

Anrig's principal contention is that ideas that turn out badly were probably bad ideas to begin with.

As the incompetence dodge supporters of the Iraq War discovered, there are times when the abstract merits of an idea cannot be judged separately from the motives and bad faith of its advocates.

These chapters sharpen Anrig's critique of conservatism: at least as much as the substance of conservatism, it is the refusal of conservatives to acknowledge and respond to these real-world outcomes that he objects to. At times, Anrig uses the word "ideology" interchangeably with "conservativism," suggesting that it is ideology itself he opposes, if the word is defined as a blind commitment to certain ideas and agendas, indifferent to their results. And the alternative he is proposing seems not to be liberalism or progressivism as ideologies, but "pragmatism," in the sense of "doing what works" and responding to results.

Pragmatism in both the philosophical and vernacular sense of the word is of course a noble element of the liberal tradition, and some historians argue that even FDR was a pragmatist, doing whatever needed to be done to end the Depression and win World War II. At the high tide of liberalism, its very essence was to disclaim ideology, as in John F. Kennedy's 1962 Yale commencement speech declaring that the problems of the modern world were technical questions to be solved not by ideology, but by "experts." Michael Dukakis inherited that brand of liberalism when he made "Competence, not ideology" the motto of his 1988 presidential campaign.

But Kennedy and Dukakis were wrong: pragmatism and expertise is not enough, and liberals paid a price for that technocratic smugness for decades. There's a place for ideology, giving coherence and direction to public life, as the *political* success of conservative rhetoric has demonstrated.

As liberalism moves into the ascendance again, it will have much to learn from both the successes and failures of conservatism, as well as from its own past mistakes. It should shed the technocratic illusion that it is not an ideology, but also avoid the blinders and indifference to results that have now brought conservatism to the brink of extinction.

Anrig's fine book has the intended effect. But at the end, I started to feel sorry for conservatism itself. It's an ideology with some good ideas and sometimes useful correctives to the excesses of liberalism. Unfortunately, it can't be separated from the bad motives, bad faith, and incompetence of its supporters. WM

Mark Schmitt is a senior fellow at the New America Foundation and a columnist for the *American Prospect*.

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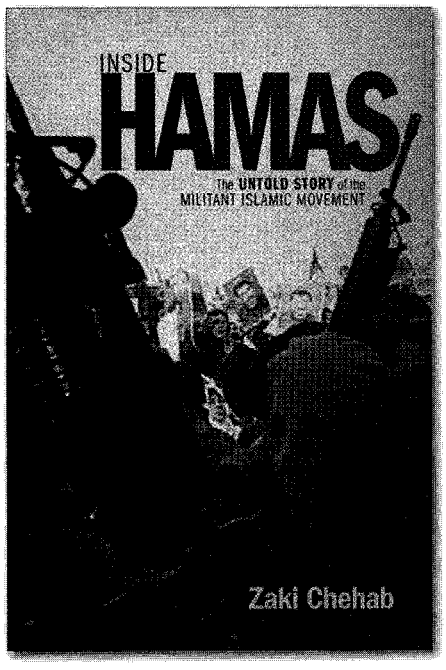

Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement

by Zaki Chehab
Nation Books, 244 pp.

Who Lost Gaza?

Why nobody predicted the rise of Hamas

By Joshua Hammer

Of all the dramatic twists and turns that have characterized the Middle East conflict over the last five decades, no event blindsided more people than the landslide victory of the radical Hamas movement in the Palestinian elections of January 2006. For months, close observers of the campaign had forecast an easy win for Fatah, the ruling party dominated by the late Yasir Arafat since the 1960s and led since Arafat's death by his moderate successor, Mahmoud Abbas. The only question, it seemed, was the size of the victory. Khalil Shikaki, a respected Palestinian pollster, forecast that Fatah would secure between 47 and 50 percent of the votes, while the Israeli army's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, told the Knesset that Fatah would squeak by with "a small majority." Instead, Hamas humiliated Fatah by capturing seventy-four of the 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council; Fatah took just forty-five. "Why was it that nobody saw it coming?" asked Condoleezza Rice, after summoning her staff to an emergency meeting the next Saturday morning at the State Department in Washington.

The answer, as Zaki Chehab makes clear in his richly detailed investigation into the rise of the group, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement*, was a combination of factors that have greased Hamas's rise as the most potent force in Palestinian politics: fierce discipline, a powerful grassroots organization, a reputation for incorruptibility, and a stealth approach to campaigning that caused almost everyone to underestimate the group. Moreover, by downplaying its Islamic fundamentalist beliefs and its dark history of suicide bombings—its rallying cry during the campaign translated as "For Change and Reform!"—Hamas was able to win the votes of many moderate, secular Palestinians fed up with the failures of the Fatah-led government.

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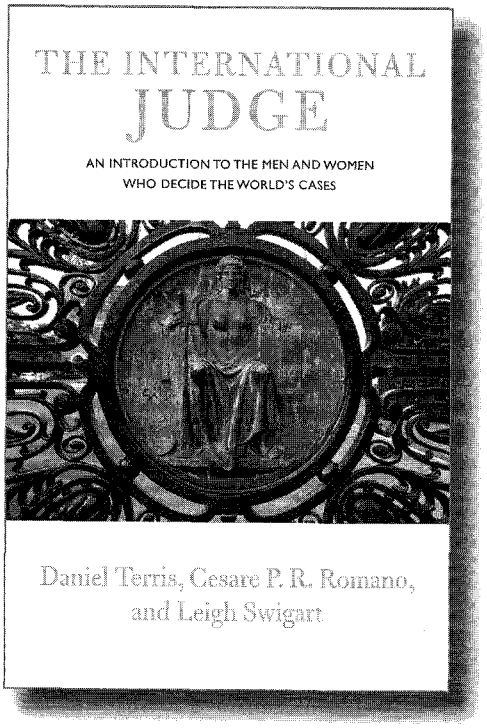
But serving as a radical voice of opposition and wielding power are two very different things, as the past year and a half have illustrated, often tragically. While refusing to renounce the key component of its charter—the destruction of Israel—Hamas has faced international isolation, fought a vicious civil war with Fatah that cleaved the Palestinian Authority in two, and watched the area under its control, Gaza, sink into deeper destitution and despair. The question that Chehab sets out to answer is whether Hamas's ascendancy will doom the Middle East to further turmoil or an accommodation with the movement can somehow be reached.

Chehab, a noted Palestinian journalist who grew up in a refugee camp near Tyre, in southern Lebanon, is a dogged reporter who has winnowed his way deeply into the secretive organization. With access that Western reporters can only dream about—he interviewed at length, and repeatedly, everyone from Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to Yassin's successor, Abdul Aziz Rantisi, to would-be suicide bombers from Hamas's military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades—Chehab provides an exhaustive account of the group's agenda, ambitions, and inner conflicts. He takes the reader through Hamas's early history, in the 1980s, as an Islamic charity organization, initially supported by Israel as a counterweight to Fatah; to the emergence of Hamas's military wing under the stewardship of its quadriplegic founder, Yassin. He chronicles the complex dynamic between Fatah and Hamas, which embarked on a campaign of suicide attacks inside Israel in an effort to derail the Oslo Accords and emerged as the Palestinian Authority's most dangerous rival. He provides a fascinating account of the ludicrously botched attempt by Israel to assassinate the Hamas leader in exile, Khaled Meshaal, by spraying him with a toxic substance in Amman, Jordan. Along the way, we get intriguing glimpses of the Arafat-Yassin relationship (a facade of cordiality belied the fact that, in 1998, one of Yassin's bodyguards had attempted to kill the Palestinian leader); Hamas's cultivation of Middle Eastern actors ranging from the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah to the Syrian dictatorship; the training of young Palestinians for acts of martyrdom; and the links between Hamas operatives and al-Qaeda.

Chehab's narrative, however, gets bogged down by its disorganized structure and its overabundance of detail. His need to chronicle the exploits of seemingly every Hamas militant who ever fired an al-Qassam rocket or launched an attack on Israel becomes numbingly monotonous, and much of the text reads as a Palestinian version of inside baseball, a cascade of Arabic names that all blur together. He is certainly no stylist, and much of the book comes off as dryly academic. Even moments of great drama, such as the targeted killing of Sheikh Yassin by an Israeli missile in March 2004, followed by the assassination of Yassin's successor, Rantisi, are treated in an almost offhand way. As a former Middle East correspondent who witnessed much of Israel's campaign to decapitate the Hamas leadership between 2002 and 2004, and who was assured by Palestinian colleagues in Gaza three years ago that "Hamas is finished," I



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Daniel Terris, Cesare P.R. Romano, Leigh Swigart;
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—José E. Alvarez, Hamilton Fish Professor of International Law & Diplomacy, Columbia Law School

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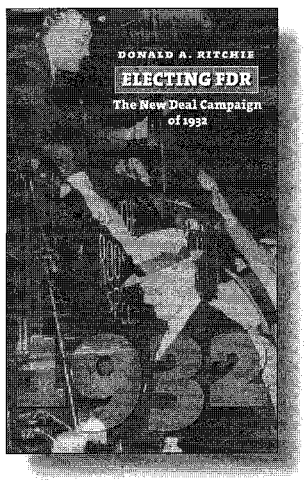

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would have liked to hear more about the group's self-resurrection from the ashes. Chehab's decision to abandon the chronological approach in favor of a more thematic one—he circles back repeatedly to the beginnings of the movement, and retells the Yassin and Rantisi killings several times—may have been the correct one, but it often makes the narrative feel far more confusing and repetitive than it needs to be.

Chehab is no friend of Hamas—he recoils from the group's wanton disregard for human life, its uncompromising dedication to terror—but he recognizes that the movement is a force to be reckoned with. Simply ignoring it, as the Bush administration and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government in Israel have done, means turning a blind eye to political realities, keeping the peace process on hold, and prolonging Palestinian suffering. "Hamas is not some alien guerrilla force," Chehab writes. "The West and any future Palestinian Authority will have to accept it for what it is—a leopard that is unlikely to change its spots—and negotiate with Hamas." But, as many Israeli leaders argue, how does one negotiate with a radical group that refuses to renounce violence and offers only the possibly of a temporary *hudna*, or ceasefire, in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal to pre-1967 borders? Israel's departure from Gaza and the breakdown that followed has, for most Israelis, served as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unilateralism. It may be that the best way to defang Hamas and empower the Palestinian middle is to put the peace process back on track. It may be that that mutual rejectionism will give way at some point to attempts at accommodation. For the foreseeable future, however, the most likely scenario appears to be the perpetuation of the dismal status quo—and of the same misery and frustration that empowered Hamas in the first place. WM

Joshua Hammer is a writer living in Berlin. His most recent book was *Yokohama Burning: The Deadly 1923 Earthquake and Fire That Helped Forge the Path to World War II*. He is currently working on a book about German colonial Africa and the twentieth century's first genocide, due out from Simon & Schuster next year.

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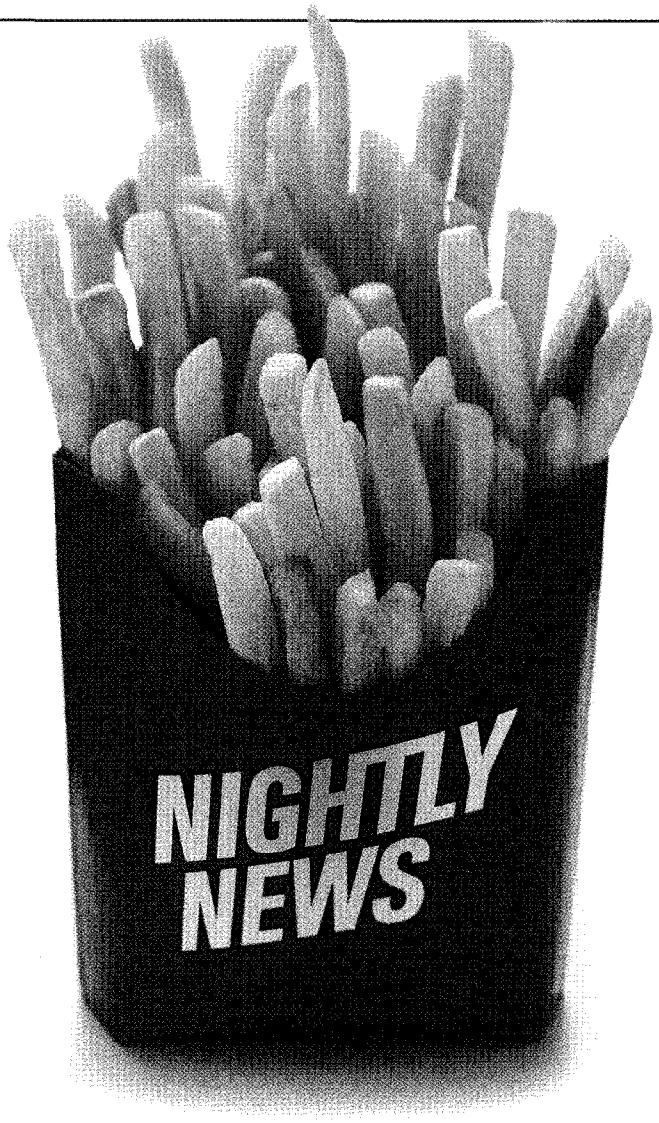

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